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IDYLLS OF THE KING

TENNYSON

EDITED BY
JAMES L. THOMAS

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ALFRED TENNYSON.

THE SILVER SERIES OF ENGLISH CLASSICS

IDYLLS OF THE KING

(SELECTIONS)

BY

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON

EDITED WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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PREFACE.

In adding another to the many text-books of English poetry already published, the editor ventures to hope that the present volume may fulfil a useful purpose in bringing the student of literature into closer touch with the greatest artist-poet of the present century, and to a better understanding of the only great English epic since the days of Milton. The "Idylls of the King" have not been a favorite subject of study in secondary schools. This is unfortunate, and is due, perhaps, to a mistaken impression concerning the adaptability of the poems for school use. If the present volume shall serve in any way to efface such an impression, its primary mission will be accomplished.

Are the "Idylls of the King" beyond the comprehension of pupils of secondary schools? If we attempt to follow in detail the spiritual significance of the poems, the question must be answered affirmatively. But to enjoy the beauty of the lines it is not necessary for us to seek out their allegorical meaning; this may well be left for subsequent consideration. Apart from their spiritual significance, the poems present sufficient material for pleasant and profitable study. The form and substance of these tales of wonder and woe, of chivalry and amatory devotion, their rich pictorial fancies, musical cadences, and delightful melodies,

will always afford abundant charm to the student. It matters not what may be the spiritual significance of "Lancelot and Elaine." The pathetic story of Elaine, the knightly courtesy of Lancelot, and the passionate love of Guinevere will always touch a tender chord in our hearts. Other features will commend themselves to the student, — the brilliancy of style, the rapidity of movement, the swift changes of scene, the striking contrasts, — all contributing to the "poetry of action" which should lead to the study of the sentimental and reflective in Tennyson. These all appeal to a more general study of this epic in our schools.

In studying the poetry of Tennyson certain books should be available to the pupils for reference, and a list of these is given in part in this volume. The editor desires to call attention, also, to the accompanying life of the poet, the History of the Arthurian Romances, and the Introduction to the "Idylls," all of which he believes will conduce to a better understanding of "Lancelot and Elaine" and "The Passing of Arthur." Malory's "Morte Darthur" will be found useful, to show how closely the poet has followed the original narrative. Lest the book should not be at hand in all schools, the editor has made frequent quotations from Malory's work, in the notes. The glossary at the end of the book, containing the archaic and obsolete terms used by Tennyson, together with their meanings, will be found valuable to the pupil. The editor hopes that the present volume may stimulate the student to a more extended study of Tennyson and his poetry.

J. E. T.

CONTENTS.

	Page
Introduction	7
Biographical	7
Tennyson and his Poetry	20
History of the Arthurian Romances	25
The Idylls of the King	33
The Coming of Arthur	43
Gareth and Lynette	62
Lancelot and Elaine	111
The Passing of Arthur	159
Notes	179
Glossary	225

BOOKS OF REFERENCE.

The following books, among many, are recommended as being helpful to those who desire a more intimate knowledge of Tennyson and his works: —

Poetic and Dramatic Works of Tennyson. Houghton, Mifflin & Company's Edition.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Memoir, by his son.
Alfred Lord Tennyson, A Study of his Life and Works, by Arthur Waugh.
The Poetry of Tennyson, by Henry Van Dyke.
Victorian Poets, by E. C. Stedman.
Tennyson, His Art and Relation to Modern Life, by Stopford A. Brooke.
The Teaching of Tennyson, by John Oates.
Studies in the Idylls, by Henry Elsdale.
Essays on Lord Tennyson's Idylls, by Bishop Littledale.
A Study of the Works of Tennyson, by E. E. Tainsh.
The Growth of the Idylls of the King, by Richard Jones.
Illustrations of Tennyson, by J. Churton Collins.
The Arthurian Epic, by S. H. Gurteen.

INTRODUCTION.

BIOGRAPHICAL.

Birth of Tennyson. — Halfway between Horncastle and Spilsby in Lincolnshire, a land of quiet villages, large fields, and gray hillsides, on the lower slope of one of those wolds so common to that part of England, nestles the hamlet of Somersby. Here, August 6, 1809, was born, in the Somersby Rectory, Alfred Tennyson, the fourth of twelve children. His father, Dr. George Clayton Tennyson, held this living in connection with that of Great Grimsby. His mother was Elizabeth Fytche, daughter of Rev. Stephen Fytche, Vicar of Louth. The country around was not at all such as one associates with the fens. It was not flat or prosaic, with dreary waters and low-lying fens, but was diversified by hills and valleys, and full of the sights and sounds of country life, rich in flowery hollows and patches of meadow land; a fit birthplace for a great poet.

Early Life. — When seven years of age the boy was asked, "Will you go to sea or to school?" "To school," he replied. Accordingly he was sent to the Louth Grammar School, near which his maternal grandmother lived. "How I did hate that school!" said Tennyson, many years later. The terms that he spent there seem to have brought very

little with them to be remembered afterwards. He left Louth in 1820, and came home to study with his father. Of his earliest attempts at poetry he says: "According to the best of my recollection, when I was eight years old I covered two sides of a slate for my brother Charles with Thomsonian blank verse in praise of flowers, Thomson being the only poet I knew. Before I could read I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the winds, and crying out, 'I hear a voice that's speaking in the wind;' and the words, 'far, far away,' had always a strange charm for me. About ten or eleven, Pope's Homer's 'Iliad' became a favorite of mine, and I wrote hundreds and hundreds of lines in the Popeian meter, nay, even could improvise them. At the age of twelve I wrote an epic of six thousand lines, *à la* Walter Scott. Though the performance was very likely worth nothing, I never felt myself more truly inspired."

Life at Home. — After leaving Louth, Alfred, together with his brother Charles, studied under his father. Dr. Tennyson was a man of great ability, scholarly and sensible. All that the boys learned of languages, of the fine arts, of mathematics, and of natural science, until they went to Cambridge, was learned from him. Although their studies were undoubtedly somewhat desultory, Alfred received a good classical education and became an accurate scholar. The boys had the advantage of their father's excellent library. There they read Shakespeare, Milton, Burke, Goldsmith, Addison, Swift, Defoe, and Bunyan.

First Book of Poems. — Charles and Alfred were never supplied with a surplus of pocket money. Now and then

they were sorely in need of sufficient funds to make some excursion. It was to obtain money for such a purpose that in March, 1827, they made a collection of verses which they had written from time to time, and submitted it to Mr. Jackson, a bookseller of Louth, who offered them £20 for the copyright, on condition that they would take half of the amount in books. The offer was accepted, and thus Alfred Tennyson began his career as a poet.

Comment on the Poems. — As an outburst of youthful poetic enthusiasm the book is not wanting in interest, although it is full of boyish imitations of other poets. Tennyson himself could hardly tolerate it in later years. The poems had comparatively little in them to indicate future promise, and attracted slight notice. Perhaps the most successful poem of the volume is "Antony and Cleopatra." The *Literary Chronicle* of May, 1827, says of the book, "This little volume exhibits a pleasing union of kindred tastes, and contains several little pieces of considerable merit."

Cambridge Life. — In 1828 Alfred Tennyson matriculated at Trinity College, Cambridge. He is spoken of as "six feet high, broad-chested, strong-limbed, his face Shakespearian, with deep eyelids, his forehead ample, crowned with dark, wavy hair, his head finely poised. What struck one most about him was the union of strength with refinement." Thompson said at once on seeing him, "That man must be a poet." He was of nervous temperament, and of shy and solitary habits, which gave him an appearance of affectation that soon wore off on more intimate acquaintance.

His solitude was early broken through, and he fell in with a

set of choice literary spirits, among whom were Arthur Hallam, who was to exert such an influence on Tennyson's life, James Spedding, Richard Monckton Milnes (afterwards Lord Houghton), Henry Alford (afterwards Dean of Canterbury), Richard C. Trench (afterwards Archbishop of Dublin), and many others who were destined to be prominent in later life. They were all members of the same society. They were a genial, high-spirited, poetical set, full of speculation and enthusiasm for the great literature of the past, and for the modern schools of thought. It is reported that Tennyson, because of his shyness, never read a paper before the society. He is represented as having Johnsonian common sense, a rare power of expression, and as being very genial, full of enjoyment, full of sensitiveness, and sometimes feeling the melancholy of life. He passed through "moods of misery unutterable," but eventually threw them off. Despite such periods of gloom, he worked on at his poems. He read his classics, his history, and natural science. He also took a lively interest in politics.

Poetic Work at Cambridge. — In 1829 he won the Chancellor's prize at Trinity College, Cambridge, for his poem on "Timbuctoo." This was written at the instigation of his father, who wished him to compete for the prize. The poem, which was in blank verse, made considerable stir. The Athenæum declared it "would have done honor to any man who ever wrote." It was a unique poem. It was not machine-made. Tennyson threw aside conventionality. There is some forced art and labored decoration in it, but it is a well-sustained piece of work, imaginative, æsthetic, polished, and indicative of his later powers.

Meanwhile the friendship between Tennyson and Hallam was growing into greater intimacy. At one time they purposed publishing a volume of poems together, but finally gave up the project. Tennyson, however, continued to write, and to a few chosen friends in his own room he would often read his latest verses.

Publication of Poems of 1830. — In 1830 Tennyson published his volume entitled, "Poems, Chiefly Lyrical," containing a carefully culled collection of his poetry up to this time. Sixty of the number are found in the present issue of his poems, among which we may note, "Claribel," "Lilian," "Isabel," "Mariana," "To Madeline," "The Merman," "The Mermaid," "The Deserted House," and "The Poet." The volume was well received. The *Westminster Review*, although it doubted the immediate appreciation of the poems, yet acknowledged that they showed the possession of poetic powers, and predicted a brilliant future for the writer. Arthur Hallam wrote an enthusiastic article on these poems, declaring that the features of original genius were clearly and strongly marked.

Departure from Cambridge. — Owing to the illness of his father, Tennyson left Cambridge in 1831, without taking a degree, and returned to Somersby. Shortly afterwards the father died, leaving the mother and a sister to the care of Alfred. He continued to live at Somersby until 1837, making occasional trips in the meantime to London and other towns. Arthur Hallam was a frequent visitor at Somersby. The acquaintance formed at Cambridge had ripened into an almost inseparable friendship between the two.

The 1832 Edition. — Meanwhile, Tennyson was busy pre-

paring a new volume of poems, which was published in 1832. Some of these poems are among his best known, as, "The Lady of Shalott," "The Miller's Daughter," "Œnone," "The Palace of Art," "The May Queen," "The Lotus Eaters," and "The Dream of Fair Women." The volume in every way marked a distinct advance in his poetical ability. It is interesting to note that thus early the Arthurian legends had attracted Tennyson's attention. "The Lady of Shalott" marks the first inclination of the poet in that direction. In these poems Tennyson showed himself both as an artist and as a thinker. In them are variety of subject, of treatment, and of melody; a sense of beauty, a keen insight into nature and man. The volume, however, encountered some severe criticism which wounded the author to the quick, and he became so nervously sensitive to these adverse comments, that he withdrew from the press "The Lover's Tale," which he had composed.

A Period of Silence. — A long period of silence followed the appearance of the second volume, prompted somewhat by the hostile criticism the poet had received, but more directly owing to the great loss he sustained in the death of his intimate friend, Arthur Hallam, who died in 1833. The death of Hallam was a severe blow to Tennyson. He was too much overwhelmed to work; even poetry failed to charm him. It was not until years afterwards that his grief found voice in one of the noblest elegies in the language, "In Memoriam," a poem worthy to be classed with "Lycidas" or "Adonais."

From 1833 to 1842. — For nearly ten years no volume of Tennyson appeared from the press, though he occasion-

ally contributed a poem to some periodical. But though silent, he was not idle. He spent much of his time in London or with his mother, read Milton, Wordsworth, and Keats, and visited the Lakes. These were the years of seed-time and growth, which were to bring his poetic ability into full maturity. Piqued by criticism, he withdrew more to himself that he might carefully judge and prune his own work. It was during this time that he formed an attachment for the lady whom he afterwards married.

The 1842 Volumes. — Thus Tennyson continued for a number of years, now toiling over a manuscript, now in social concourse with his literary friends, and now running down into the country to enjoy an outing with some kindred spirit. At last, in 1842, his fears and hesitations were dispelled, and the long silence was broken. Two volumes of "Poems, by Alfred Tennyson" appeared, and a new era in the poet's reputation began. The two volumes of poems were substantially what we have to-day. Among the *new* poems were "The Gardener's Daughter," "Dora," "Locksley Hall," "Godiva," "Edward Gray," "Lady Clare," "Break, Break, Break," "St. Simeon Stylites," "The Beggar Maid," "Sir Galahad," "Sir Lancelot and Queen Guinevere," and the "Morte d'Arthur." Lord Hallam Tennyson, in his "Memoir," says of the poet at this time: "My father's comprehension of human life had grown, and the new poems dealt with an extraordinarily wide range of subjects, — chivalry, duty, reverence, self-control, human passion, the love of country, science, philosophy, and the many complex moods of the religious nature." The recep-

tion of these poems was immediately enthusiastic. Critics of all kinds lifted their voices in praise. Foremost among those to appreciate Tennyson was Wordsworth, the Poet Laureate, who remarked, "He [Tennyson] is decidedly the best of our living poets, and I hope will live to give the world still better things." In America the poems met with a cordial reception. Lowell declared that "it might be centuries before such a thinker and speaker as Tennyson appeared." The rise of Alfred Tennyson may be said to date from the appearance of these poems.

Personal Appearance. — Of Tennyson's appearance at this time Aubrey de Vere writes: "It was in 1841 or 1842 that I first met the poet. The large, dark eyes, generally dreamy but with an occasional gleam of imaginative alertness, the dusky, almost Spanish, complexion, the high-built head, and the massive abundance of curling hair like the finest and blackest silk, are still before me, and no less the stalwart form, strong 'with the certain step of man.'" Carlyle presents this picture of his "soul's Brother": "A great shock of rough, dusky-dark hair; bright, laughing, hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, yet most majestic; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking; clothes cynically loose, free, and easy. His voice is musically metallic; speech and speculation free and plenteous. I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe."

The Influence of Tennyson. — The unique position of Tennyson as an influence in drawing together the poetry of the earlier and the later years of the century is not, perhaps, sufficiently recognized. No other poet has so

singularly combined the attributes of the old and the new. Without borrowing from his predecessors, he softened and broadened their manner into a tone which prepared poetry for its later development.

1842–1847. — The beginnings of fame came to Tennyson very quietly. His poems continued to be widely read, and succeeding editions were published. All this time he was busy on "In Memoriam," now in London, now at Beachy Head, and now at Cheltenham. In 1845 a pension of £200 was bestowed on him in recognition of his poetic talents.

"The Princess." — Meanwhile the poet's friends were clamoring for a complete work. They complained that his power had been displayed in fragments having no connection. In obedience to this demand, he published in 1847, "The Princess, a Medley." It has generally been considered that the germ of "The Princess" is to be found in Dr. Johnson's "Rasselas." Tennyson himself said that he believed the subject of the poem to be original, and certainly the story is full of original incident, humor, and fancy. Tennyson went over the plan of the poem with the lady who was to be his wife as early as 1839. He is reported to have said that the two great social questions of the day in England were "the housing and education of the poor man, and the higher education of woman," and he affirmed that the sooner woman found out, before the great educational movement began, that "woman is not undeveloped man, but diverse," the better it would be for the progress of the world. This is the keynote of "The Princess," the appearance of which excited considerable unfavorable com-

ment. Although admittedly brilliant, it was thought by many, even among Tennyson's friends, to be scarcely worthy of the author. The abundant grace, descriptive beauty, and human sentiment were evident, but the medley was thought to be somewhat incongruous, and the main web of the tale too weak to sustain the plot and the embroidery raised upon it.

"In Memoriam." — The year 1850 was a notable one for Tennyson. It was in this year that he gave to the world "In Memoriam," on which he had been at work for years, and in which he poured forth his very soul. "In Memoriam" is, perhaps, the richest tribute ever offered by the affection of friendship at the tomb of the departed. This tribute to Arthur Henry Hallam, his friend and companion of seventeen years before, was received with reverence and admiration. No poem of Tennyson is so often used for quotation, none so rich in phrases that have long since become household words. But it will probably be always read and remembered for special passages rather than for the strength of its argument. It is, in the opinion of many, the greatest work of the poet's genius. "He has done for Friendship what Petrarch did for Love." It is a permanent addition to the wealth of English literature. Everywhere is the expression of a deep religious feeling and an abiding faith.

Tennyson's Marriage. — Tennyson was married June 13, 1850, to Emily Sellwood, for whom he had formed an attachment in 1835; but whom he had been unable to marry because of his financial condition. Mrs. Tennyson is the "dear, near, and true" in the beautiful dedication

of "Enoch Arden." They were married at Shiplake Church, near Caversham, and settled at Twickenham, whence in 1853 they removed to Farringford in the Isle of Wight. Their wedded life was ever a happy one. Mrs. Tennyson, possessing rare mental qualities, became her husband's adviser in all his literary efforts, and to her he invariably referred his work for a final criticism before it was published.

The Laureateship. — It was also in 1850 that Tennyson was appointed Poet Laureate. Wordsworth was dead, and the literary world began to discuss the succession to the laureateship. There were several candidates in the field, among them Leigh Hunt and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. The final choice, however, fell on Tennyson, and he retained the position until his death.

"Maud and Other Poems." — It is impossible to give even a passing notice to many of the poems that flowed from his pen after his appointment to the laureateship. "The Charge of the Light Brigade" was published in 1854. In 1855 appeared "Maud and Other Poems." Some of the most exquisite lines of "Maud" had been written long before, but when the poem appeared it was received with a general chorus of disapprobation. It was declared to be dreamy, obscure, and incoherent. Its chief fault was thought to be the war spirit that it breathed, which was not suited to Tennyson's muse. The poem was not wanting in vindicators, however, and received much praise from some of the commentators. It was a poem that Tennyson delighted to read aloud. He regarded it as one of his best works, an opinion that posterity has sustained.

"The Idylls," "Enoch Arden," etc. — In 1855, Tennyson

matured the plan of "The Idylls of the King." The first four of the Idylls appeared in 1859, and were followed at intervals by the others until 1885 (see "The Idylls of the King" in the Introduction). They may be said to represent the finest expression of Tennyson's genius. In them he reaches the height of his poetic fame. While waiting for the proper mood, as he expressed it, to complete them, he busied himself on subjects less lofty in strain, — the sea, which he always loved, and the different phases of English life, in which he took a deep interest. From the chivalric heroes of the past his mind reacted to the heroism of the present, and in 1864 he published a volume which he called at first "The Idylls of the Hearth," a title withdrawn before the publication of the work. Included in the work were "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "The Northern Farmer," and other poems that dealt with nearly every phase of human life. "Enoch Arden" touched a chord of popular sympathy. Sixty thousand copies of the poem were sold in a very short time, and with the exception of "In Memoriam" it became the most popular of Tennyson's works.

The Dramas. — From 1864 to 1875 an occasional poem appeared from Tennyson's pen, but nothing of importance. The year 1875 marks an epoch in Tennyson's literary career. In this year he published the first of his dramas. It may seem surprising that a poet of sixty-six years should essay a new field of literature. It was a hazardous experiment, and one to which Tennyson's talents seemed hardly adapted; but he had always taken a lively interest in the stage; he believed in its future; he regarded the drama as one of the most humanizing of influences; and he was anxious to

round out his poetic career by making some permanent contributions to the literature of the Stage. He chose for his first subjects the three great periods in English history of "Harold," "Becket," and "Queen Mary," so as to complete the line of Shakespeare's English chronicle plays. He called his subjects his "historical trilogy." "Queen Mary" was published in 1875, "Harold" in 1876, and "Becket" in 1884. With respect to character-painting, Tennyson considered "Queen Mary" the most successful of his plays. It was, however, severely criticised when put upon the stage. While the workmanship was superb, it was deficient in dramatic construction; it lacked motive and progress. In "Harold," Tennyson remedied these defects in a measure, although the same general criticisms have been made on all his dramas. "Becket" is a dramatic poem rather than a stage play, a study of character rather than an effort of movement and action. It has been the most successful of any of Tennyson's dramas. Of the minor dramas, "The Falcon" and "The Cup" were published in 1884, though they had been represented on the stage in 1881; "The Promise of May" was published in 1886. The last of his dramatic works, as well as the last great literary effort of his life, was the beautiful pastoral play, "The Foresters," which was produced in 1892, only a short time previous to the poet's death.

Other Noteworthy Poems. — During the last years of his life Tennyson busied himself not alone with his dramas. With extraordinary vigor and freshness he continued to produce other work of the highest literary excellence. He wrote "The Revenge, a Ballad of the Fleet" in 1878, "The Defence of Lucknow" in 1879, two of the most spirited of

his poems, and worthy to be classed with "The Charge of the Light Brigade." In 1880 he published a book of "Ballads," containing among others the two just mentioned. This was followed by a volume of poems in 1885, dedicated to the poet Browning. Among these poems was "The Charge of the Heavy Brigade." In 1886 appeared "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After," and in 1889 "Demeter and Other Poems." They were the aftermath of the poetic harvest, but they bore no evidences of mental decay.

Elevation to the Peerage. — Meanwhile Tennyson had been approached with the offer of a peerage. For some time he hesitated to accept the honor, but at last he consented, with the remark that he should regret his simple name all his life. Accordingly, in 1884, he was made Baron of Aldworth and Farringford, and took his seat in the House of Lords.

Death of Tennyson. — During the last years of his life Tennyson became wedded to country solitude. He liked to wander through the byways around Aldworth and Farringford, but seldom visited the city. In the fall of 1892 his strength failed rapidly, and he passed away October 6, at Aldworth. He died in the fulness of years and honor, with the capacity of his genius unwithered by age, rich and enchanting to the last. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, near the grave of Browning.

TENNYSON AND HIS POETRY: A STUDY.

Tennyson the Man. — No one can read the poetry of Tennyson without feeling that, at the basis of all his

teaching, indeed, of all his works, is Tennyson *the man*. Like Milton, he combined great poetic genius with exalted character. To the union of these two elements we may attribute the charm which he has exercised over the hearts and minds of the English-speaking people. As early as 1832 Arthur Hallam wrote of Tennyson: "His nervous temperament and habits of solitude give an appearance of affectation which is no true interpretation of the man. I think you would hardly fail to see much for love as well as for admiration." The same may be said of his later life. He was reserved even to shyness, and seldom went into society. He was highly sensitive to criticism. At times he was possessed with a spirit of melancholy, and while composing he was often abstracted for days. These conditions sometimes made him appear brusque; but this seeming discourtesy was only superficial. With his family and friends he was happy and genial. He possessed a strong sense of humor, delighted in witty stories, and told them admirably. He was a brilliant conversationalist, and one of the most entertaining of companions. He was versed in a wide range of subjects, and there was a strong vein of common sense in all his talk. He had a high regard and sympathy for his fellow-men, and a noble and splendid courtesy. He was a true English gentleman.

Higher Qualities of his Character. — No element of Tennyson's character so pervades his work as his nobility of thought. This lofty tone is present in every poem he has written. His verse is characterized by the very spirit of honor and of reverence for all that is pure and true.

His religious faith, too, was of the loftiest. He had a profound respect for sincere religion in every shape, and all Christian creeds had his sympathy. The immanence of God in man; the brotherhood of the human race; the continuance of each man's personal consciousness in the life to be; the vitality of the present; God and the spiritual, the only true and real, — these were the tenets of his faith. His conception of love was noble and reverential. Love was to him an unselfish passion; such love he ever manifested in his home and among his friends; such love he regarded as the inspiration of man's noblest deeds. He had a childlike simplicity of nature, and this characteristic marks his work. While he often adorns his lines to profuseness for the purposes of art, the emotions he appeals to are easy to understand and common to all. The principles that he upholds are those upon which society is based. He had little inclination for politics, but was deeply interested in the social questions of the day. "I believe in progress," he said, "and I would conserve the hopes of man." This is the keynote of his poetry. He was intensely patriotic, and regarded England as the greatest country on earth. The patriotic lyrics he has written stir the blood. He was for Freedom, such as had been evolved by the gradual growth of English institutions. He had small faith in outbursts of revolutionary fervor. Liberty he considered to be gained by patient years of working, and not by radical changes.

And, lastly, as characterizing the man through his works, we may note an abiding faith in Law throughout the worlds of sense and spirit, a recognition of a settled scheme of

great purposes underlying a universal order, and gradually developing to completion.

Tennyson the Poet. — In every well-developed literature we find two classes of poets, one including those who draw their material directly from Nature; the other, those who interpret Nature through Art. The former, such as Wordsworth, take their characters from real life; their incidents have their counterparts in human experience; they seldom indulge in description for the sake of description; their language, as a rule, is plain, simple, and impassioned; they do not trouble themselves with niceties of expression; they are great artists because they commune with the truth instead of working on critical principles; they are true to Art because they are true to Nature. The latter, of which Gray is an example, are essentially imitative and reflective. They are usually men possessed of great natural ability, extensive culture, refined taste, and a wide acquaintance with the literature that has preceded them. Occasionally they are endowed with great original genius. Their material is derived not so much from the world of Nature as from the world of Art. To this class we must assign Tennyson. Not, perhaps, a poet of great original genius, but of great assimilative skill, taste, and learning, he belongs to a class of poets whose work has a twofold value and interest, first, for its obvious, simple, and intrinsic beauties, which make its popular side, and, second, for its niceties of adaptation and expression, which form its intellectual side. In Tennyson we deal with an accomplished artist whose most successful works are not direct studies from simple

Nature, but studies from Nature interpreted by Art. Not the equal of Shakespeare, Milton, or Wordsworth, he is, nevertheless, a great poet. For fifty years he stood at the head of contemporary English poets, and his work is the most rounded and melodious, the most adequate expression of the poetry of Victorian England. Of broad scholarship and great intellectual ability, he absorbed the deepest and best thought of his age. Singularly alive to the spirit of his time, he has responded to its moods, and made its burning issues the very soul, the animating principle, of his work.

The Poetry of Tennyson. — Turning now to the substance of Tennyson's poems, we may note that above all they display the work of a consummate artist. As an artist in verse, Tennyson is the greatest of modern poets. Other poets may have surpassed him in special instances; but he is the one who most rarely nods, and who always finishes his verse to the extreme. "An artist should get his workmanship as good as he can, and make his work as perfect as possible," was his guiding principle. As an artist he cannot be excelled, but his art, like that of all poets who strive for artistic effect, is sometimes ornate rather than pure, and characterized by a want of simplicity. We have referred to Tennyson's simplicity of nature, to the simplicity of the emotions and feelings to which he appeals, but we cannot always point to the simplicity of his language. Directness of expression often gives way to elaborated diction. If the matter be meagre, the form is elaborate; yet there is always perfection of detail. The metre is as near perfection as any poet has ever attained.

We feel that Tennyson knows all the secrets of harmonious measures and is a master of rhythm. The melody of his diction is always charming, his epithets are always suggestive. Analogous to art, indeed, a part of it, is beauty, for art is but the love of beauty and the power of fitly expressing it. Tennyson was faithful to beauty. Power to see beauty and power to shape it were possessed by him in a remarkable degree. Of mere sound-beauty his poems are full.

Combined with his love of beauty is the love of Nature which his poems breathe. Everywhere it enters into his poetry; but to Tennyson Nature was Law, not Life. His descriptions of Nature are delightful. For minute observation and vivid painting of the details of natural scenery Tennyson is without a rival; but there is a lack of warmth, of life, in his Nature. He looks at Nature as a picture and describes it from the outside. His description excites more our intellectual than our emotional interest. His Nature is Law, not a living Being.

The last element in Tennyson's poetry which we shall note is the sympathy for his fellow-men which the poet has expressed. It embraces every class of mankind, high and low, thinker and worker. It takes upon itself the emotions, the hopes, the fears, the highest aspirations of mankind. Taken all in all, the voice of his age has found its surest utterance in the poetry of Alfred Tennyson.

HISTORY OF THE ARTHURIAN ROMANCES.

Popularity of the Romances. — To the student of English literature there is no more fascinating field of research

than the cycle of romances that centre about King Arthur and his Round Table. The theme of bard, chronicler, and trouvère, these tales were the delight of court and cottage for centuries, and satisfied the intense passion of the times for narrative or romance literature. The most popular poets of every age have turned to this fountainhead of European romance to find in the body of legend here locked up a volume of ideal subjects worthy of their song. Spenser, in his "Faerie Queene," makes "Prince Arthure" his type of "magnificence" and "noble doing." Milton and Dryden thought the "Round Table" a not unworthy theme for an epic. Lapsing into obscurity during the trying times of the Reformation and the prosaic era of the Commonwealth, these tales of chivalry have been rescued at last, and the nineteenth century has witnessed a revival of national interest in them, for which we are indebted chiefly to Southey and Tennyson, the latter of whom has clothed these grand romances with all the beauty of his most polished art.

Origin of the Romances. — It is fortunate for the student that the development of the Arthurian romances can be traced with comparative ease. In recent years the subject has been investigated in all its phases by the ablest scholars and most profound critics of Europe. In its dawn the Arthurian romances carry us back into the dim twilight of British literature, when Kelt and Saxon were waging a deadly struggle for supremacy, when the heroic valor of the Kymri inspired the bards attached to this or that chieftain to sing the praises of their patron in camp and castle. Some of these songs have come down to us, and, although

they are obscured and distorted by fables, we may still glean occasional bits of genuine history. From these old Welsh songs we may conclude that Arthur was a real, historic personage, that he lived in the sixth century, and that, as chief of a petty tribe in Cornwall, he headed the tribes of western Britain against the encroaching Saxons from the east, and the Picts and Scots from the north; about him the later bards wove many strange myths and fictions. We may note here, also, that at this time many of the oppressed Kymri fled to the Continent as an asylum, and settled in Brittany, carrying with them the songs, traditions, and tales of their former home. They carried with them, too, the remembrance of their chieftains, particularly of Arthur. There they sang of his deeds, his death, and his hoped-for return. Some of these old songs are still extant, and we are not surprised to find Brittany filled with Arthurian traditions. Thus from two sources, the Kymric and the Breton, do we obtain our bardic knowledge of Arthur. In all these songs he is simply a courageous warrior, who by his heroic bravery stamped his image on the unwritten records of his country, and dying left behind him a memory dear to the national heart. How is it, then, that "the name of King Arthur came to stand for an ideal of royal wisdom, chivalric virtue, and knightly prowess, which was recognized alike in England, France, and Germany"? Let us see.

From the Sixth to the Twelfth Centuries. — From the sixth to the twelfth centuries there was a dearth of literature throughout Europe, particularly in the modern European tongues. Bards and minstrels continued to sing, to tell

the mythic history of the past, enveloping their characters in a haze of fancy and fable to suit the caprice of their hearers. In their hands Arthur becomes the son of Uther Pendragon. He is a king, the chief of battles. Nothing can resist his valor. He holds his court at Caerleon. He undertakes great expeditions, subdues great tracts of country, and finally falls in the battle of Camlan. We find, however, no trace of knight-errantry or of the high ideas of love and honor, or of that chivalry which breathes through the later romances, and lends such a charm to them. For these we must look to another source.

The Breton Bards and Geoffrey's History. — It seems highly probable that the Arthur of *romance* is to a great extent the creation of the Breton bards. In their songs he becomes a poetic character, based on historic tradition. From being simply the warrior hero of song, he becomes an epic hero. Straggling tales, oral traditions, and unwritten songs were collected and remodelled to suit the fancies of later bards. In sympathy with the age of knight-errantry and chivalry which was dawning, the more advanced notions of chivalric heroism and Christian virtue were introduced and attributed to Arthur and his courtiers. This collection was thrown into a fictional whole, called "Brut-y-Brenhined," or "History of the Kings." In the first part of the twelfth century this manuscript came into the hands of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a priest of the Anglican Church, who made a Latin translation of the work, incorporating therein his own fund of Welsh legends and traditions of the day. Here we find the Arthur of the Breton bards, who retains but little of the warrior chieftain

of the old Welsh stories. His thoughts, his words, his deeds are those of a knightly king. He is in the flush of vigorous youth, perfect in form, handsome in features, and noble in character. He is a Christian, with high ideas of the Christian virtues. He is the centre of the world of chivalry, surrounded by courteous knights. He succors the oppressed and redresses wrongs. He is as brave as the Charlemagne of story. His reputation is world-wide. He is led by love of glory and adventure beyond the limits of his own kingdom. He chooses a queen, Guinevere, daughter of Leodegraunce, the superior of all the ladies of the world, and carries her likeness with him into combat as a sure token of victory. In the "History of Geoffrey," then, the germ of history blossoms forth into the Arthur of romance, "an ideal of the purest chivalry, and surrounded by all the pomp and circumstance of knight-errantry."

Other Histories of the Romances. — The "History of Geoffrey," with its weird Kymric legends, its scraps of authentic history, and its fully developed romance, all mingled together under the guise of history, was received with delight by nobility and commoners. It gained immediate popularity, and produced a sensation beyond all parallel. At this time all Europe was seized with an intense passion for narrative or romantic literature, and nowhere was this passion stronger than in Britain. The "History" supplied the need. People of all ranks read it with avidity. But its popularity did not stop here. The Norman trouvères, or minstrels, found in the book a veritable storehouse of romantic stories, which, versified, and embellished with their own fancies, never failed to

fascinate their hearers. Robert Wace translated the "History" into Norman-French verse, adding here and there a popular tradition. He it is who first makes mention of the Round Table, which he dismisses with a mere allusion. Fifty years later, Layamon, a Welsh priest, wrote a "History" in English, recapitulating the main points of Geoffrey's "History" with some important additions. Here we find the first mention of the fairies at Arthur's birth, and of his voyage, when dying, to the Isle of Avalon. Here, too, the legend of the Round Table undergoes development.

A Summary. — Such was the development of the Arthurian romances up to the beginning of the thirteenth century. It is worthy of note that they consisted of little more than a condensation of preëxisting poems, legends, and tales. As we come to the beginning of the thirteenth century, however, a marvellous transformation takes place, and the fully developed modern romances of Arthur begin to assume definite shape.

The Work of Walter Map. — It is to the genius of one man that we are indebted for the greater part of all that is artistic and imperishable in the Arthurian romance. In the early part of the thirteenth century, Walter Map, a chaplain to Henry II., and, later, Archdeacon of Oxford, a man of undoubted genius and vast learning, and of high repute at court, impressed with the popularity of the Arthurian tales, conceived the idea of spiritualizing them by blending with them the legend of the Holy Graal, and thus making them a medium of instruction in the recognized theology of the day. The Holy Graal, or Grail,

was a cup used by Christ at the Last Supper, and subsequently by Joseph of Arimathea to receive the blood that flowed from the wounds of Christ as he was hanging on the cross. There was a tradition that Joseph came to England, bringing with him the sacred vessel. Here it was lost. The search for it, the Quest of the Holy Graal, was undertaken by many of the Knights of the Round Table. Such was the legend that Map skilfully blended with the Arthurian tales, and so successfully did he accomplish his object that his works obtained an instantaneous popularity, not only in England but in all Europe. The trouvères, or romancers, reproduced the chaste fantasies of Map, and invented additional romances, based on existing legends. It is here that the Arthur of romance bursts into view, surrounded by a brilliant pageant of knightly heroes and heroines. But before all is the introduction of a grand unifying theme, which serves as a central idea to bind the detached legends, tales, and poems into a grand cyclus of Romance, conforming in some respects to an epic. This theme is the Quest of the Holy Graal. It is the one point towards which every incident tends. Its achievement is the culminating point of the whole story. By it Map has spiritualized the tales, and changed essentially their whole scope and aim. In his hands the Legend of the Holy Graal becomes an allegory of man's striving after a perfect knowledge of Truth and of God, to be gained only by a life of ideal purity. Into the popular adventures of the knights he has incorporated a series of sermons on the Quest for Eternal Life. It is a reflection of the highest spiritual

aspirations of man, and of his mortal conflict with the powers of evil.

The Romances Developed. — In the romances, Arthur's Court, held at Caerleon-on-Usk, or perhaps at Camelot, becomes the centre of all that is imperial in empire and knightly in knighthood. Valiant knights from other lands, allured by the splendor of his court, are drawn as by magic to his side. Here we find Lancelot du Lac, Tristam, Galahad, Percival, and Bors. The Order of the Round Table is instituted. The Round Table had thirty-two seats, including the "*siege perillous*," which was wrought by magic art, and reserved for the best knight in the whole world, until whose appearance it was to remain vacant, but which was filled at last by Galahad. At this point, Arthur retires somewhat into the background. As he took no part in the Quest of the Holy Graal, the narrative is more especially occupied with the deeds of those who acquired celebrity by participating in that noble quest.

Malory's Work. — Finally we come to the true source of the Tennysonian Idylls, Malory's "Morte Darthur." In 1470, Sir Thomas Malory made a compilation of the preëxisting tales and legends which he found in "many noble volumes," for the making of his "book of King Arthur, and of his noble knights of the Round Table." This book was published by Caxton, in 1485, and was entitled "Morte Darthur." For the Arthurian legends, Malory's work is the most accessible to the modern reader. It is not an artistic production. It contains no well-conceived plot, and there is an evident lack of

system in it. It makes no pretence to chronological truth. The setting of the stories belongs to Malory's own time rather than to the times he tells of, to the age of chivalry rather than to the crude era of Arthur. No such state of society as depicted by Malory ever existed. His picture is only a fantastic and exaggerated idealization of the feudal chivalry of the Middle Ages. Still, the book has a magnetic charm that is irresistible. It early made a deep impression on Tennyson, and to it he had recourse for much of the material of the Idylls.

THE IDYLLS OF THE KING.

Ever since the first appearance of the Idylls, in 1859, there has been no end of controversy as to Tennyson's real purpose in the production of this work. Happily many of the existing doubts have been dispelled, and the poet's own idea is made clear in the "Memoir" recently issued by his son. From this treatise we learn that the Arthurian romances made a deep impression on Tennyson at an early age. When a boy he chanced upon a copy of Malory's work, and became fascinated with its stories of chivalry and knightly prowess. From his earliest years he had written out in prose various histories of Arthur. In 1832 the first of his Arthurian poems appeared in the form of a lyric, "The Lady of Shalott," another version of the story of "Lancelot and Elaine." This was followed ten years later by the other lyrics, "Lancelot and Guinevere" (partly, if not wholly, written in 1830) and "Sir Galahad." In the 1842 edition also

appeared "Morte d'Arthur," which was represented to be the fragment of a long epic, the rest of which the author had destroyed. Thus it appeared that the poet was already meditating a freer treatment of the Arthurian romances than he had given them. Later, Tennyson himself said to his son, "At twenty-four I meant to write an epic or a drama of King Arthur, and I thought that I should take twenty years about the work." A fragment of an epic in prose, and a rough draft, written in 1833, were found among Tennyson's MSS. His son tells us that after 1840 Tennyson began to study the epical King Arthur in earnest. He thought, read, and talked about King Arthur. What he called "the greatest of all poetical subjects" perpetually haunted him, and in 1855 he determined upon the final shape of the poem.

The seemingly random and desultory manner in which the Idylls were brought out mystified scholars and critics. The first issue, comprising only four Idylls, — "Enid," "Vivien," "Elaine," and "Guinevere," — appeared in 1859. They bore little evidence of any epic design. They were regarded as four character studies of womanhood, two forming lights in the general picture, and the other two being the contrasted shadows. Vivien, crafty and wicked, was set over against the tender innocence of Elaine. Enid, the true wife, was opposed to Guinevere, the untrue. They were what their names implied, *Idylls*, picturesque poems, not pastoral, of a lofty and noble strain, each presenting a separate picture with one leading sentiment for its motive. The remaining Idylls appeared at intervals between 1869 and 1885, as follows, — in 1869,

"The Holy Grail," "The Coming of Arthur," "Pellias and Ettarre," and "The Passing of Arthur"; in 1871, "The Last Tournament"; in 1872, "Gareth and Lynette"; in 1885, "Balin and Balan." Subsequently "Enid" was divided into "The Marriage of Geraint" and "Geraint and Enid," making twelve poems in all, conforming to the number hinted at in the "Morte d'Arthur" of 1842. To these Tennyson prefixed a prologue, dedicating the Idylls to Prince Albert, and added an epilogue "To the Queen."

With the appearance of the 1869 Idylls, the real intention of the whole work seemed to be changed. It was apparent that the Idylls were not simply pictorial fancies involving character studies, but that each filled its place in a connected series grouped round a central figure; that the "Idylls of the King" formed one great poem, characterized by epic unity of design and grandeur of tone. Moreover, a spiritual significance was seen to be deeply interfused through these great poems, and Tennyson himself, in his epilogue "To the Queen," disclosed his grand moral purpose, which is now recognized as consistently running through the whole series. He there describes the work as an old imperfect tale: —

> "New-old, and shadowing Sense at war with Soul,
> Rather than that gray king, whose name, a ghost,
> Streams like a cloud, man-shaped, from mountain peak,
> And cleaves to cairn and cromlech still: or him
> Of Geoffrey's book, or him of Malleor's, one
> Touched by the adulterous finger of a time
> That hover'd between war and wantonness,
> And crownings and dethronements."

This allegorical significance is rarely obtruded by the poet, and, indeed, apart from such significance, the lover of poetry will always find a charm both in the form and substance of these tales of love, chivalry, and celestial vision. It is for the story and the style that the Idylls should be read by the pupils of secondary schools. The allegory, the moral, may be left for more mature study and consideration. Beneath the surface the poem is an allegory of the soul of man warring with sense, of the spiritual struggling against the sensual element in our nature, of the passing of the soul through life to death and through death to resurrection. "The intellect, the conscience, the will, the imagination, and the divine spirit in man are shadowed forth in mystic personages." And this spiritual significance, as well as the epic unity of design, we now know to have been determined upon by the poet as early as 1855.

Too much importance has been attached to the allegorical element in the Idylls. Arthur and his knights and the ladies of his court are not abstractions of ideal qualities; they are real men and women, with human feelings and trials and conflicts; they do represent and embody certain virtues and vices, but these qualities work and live in their actions and in their lives. Of two reviews of the Idylls, which Tennyson himself considered the best, he often said: "They [the authors] have taken my hobby and ridden it too hard, and have explained some things too allegorically, although there is an allegorical, or perhaps rather a parabolic, drift in the poem. . . . Yet there is no single fact or incident in the

Idylls, however seemingly mystical, which cannot be explained as without any mystery or allegory whatever." Again, when asked as to the interpretation of a passage in the Idylls, he answered: "They mean that, and they do not. I hate to be tied down to say, '*This* means *that*,' because the thought within the image is much more than any one interpretation." "Poetry," he affirmed, "is like shot-silk, with many glancing colors. Every reader must find his own interpretation according to his ability and according to his sympathy with the poet." Of the general drift of the Idylls, he said: "The whole is the dream of man coming into practical life and ruined by one sin. Birth is a mystery and death is a mystery, and in the midst lies the table-land of life and its struggles and performances. It is not the history of one man or of one generation, but of a whole cycle of generations." According to the author himself, the three lines (912–915) at the close of Arthur's speech in "The Holy Grail" are the (spiritually) central lines of the Idylls:—

> "In moments when he feels he cannot die,
> And knows himself no vision to himself,
> Nor the High God a vision."

The unity of design of the Idylls appears not only in the gradual development of the effect of one great sin, but also in incidental features. Thus, the story in its course runs through one complete year, the changes of nature in their succession forming a background for the successive scenes of the poem. Concerning this phase of unity Tennyson made the following manuscript note:

"'The Coming of Arthur' is on the night of the New Year; when he is wedded 'the world is white with May;' on a summer night the vision of the Holy Grail appears; and the 'Last Tournament' is in the 'yellowing autumn-tide.' Guinevere flees through the mists of autumn, and Arthur's death takes place at midnight in midwinter. The form of 'The Coming of Arthur' and of the 'Passing' is purposely more archaic than that of the other Idylls."

With the exception of the two Geraint poems, which were taken from Lady Charlotte Guest's translation of Welsh legends, called "The Mabinogion," "The Idylls of the King" follow more or less closely the outlines of Malory. Tennyson omits the preposterous and the more indelicate elements of the romance. His knights and ladies are refined, graceful, noble, and without roughness. Just as Shakespeare never troubled himself to invent the plots of his plays, but had recourse to old stories and ballads, modifying them in detail, and making them to all intents and purposes new dramas, so Tennyson has taken the mediæval books of romance, and constructed from them a poem having a unity of design, imbued with a moral significance, and suited to the aspirations of our own day, while preserving to some extent the archaic color of the feudal world. The reign of Arthur as depicted by him is a sort of Utopia, unreal and visionary. Arthur is a man in whom the spiritual instincts of his nature dominate the sensual. He is, as Guinevere acknowledges, "the highest and most human, too." He is the ideal man, and his many struggles to uphold the best in

life are but a reflection of the eternal conflict waged in human life between the spirit and the flesh.

Of the merits of the different Idylls there is a diversity of opinion. Elsdale considers "Guinevere" and "The Passing of Arthur" to be the two finest. Following these he would place "Merlin and Vivien" or "Lancelot and Elaine." The latter, Gurteen considers one of the finest, if not the finest, of the whole series of Tennyson's Arthurian poems. It seems the most idyllic of the Idylls. Tennyson's power of drawing the character of a simple and lovable woman is here seen in perfection. The soliloquy of Lancelot at the close is one of the finest passages of the Idylls. Lord Hallam Tennyson in his "Memoir" says, "Of all the 'Idylls of the King,' 'The Holy Grail' seems to me to express most my father's highest self." There is, perhaps, no book of the Idylls so perfect in its scheme, so brilliant and impressive in its imagery, as "The Holy Grail." The remaining Idylls, although containing many admirable passages and depicting many lovable characters, possess no claim to individual superiority. They are links in the chain of development, tracing the growth of the "one sin" to its ultimate fruition. The Idylls as a whole are the most permanent of Tennyson's contributions to English literature. They embody the highest poetic achievement of his genius, and belong to the exalted heights of song. On them he lavished all the beauty of his most cultivated art, and their completion marked the fulfilment of his forty years' hope.

It has been a matter of considerable discussion among commentators whether "The Idylls of the King" meet the

requirements of an epic poem. The consensus of opinion seems to be that the work is entitled to be so classed. We know that Tennyson himself considered the combined series as an epic. Departing somewhat from the conventional epic form by lack of closely continuous narrative, the Idylls yet have the grandeur of tone and the underlying unity of design essential to an epic. One central figure dominates the whole, towards whom all the action and all the personages of the story converge. The events tend towards one important issue through a succession of minor episodes. The twelve books present a full cycle of heroic story. Taken all in all, "The Idylls of the King" seem to possess a rightful claim to be considered what Tennyson intended they should be, "The Epic of Arthur."

IDYLLS OF THE KING

(SELECTIONS)

INTRODUCTION TO "THE COMING OF ARTHUR."

"The Coming of Arthur," the first of the Idylls in dramatic sequence, appeared in 1869, and is taken largely from Malory's "Morte Darthur," Book I. It is the prologue to all the Idylls. In it are mingled allegory and story, and the main lines of both are placed before the readers. There is the recognition of the human soul embodied in Arthur, which first appears in a waste and desert land groaning under mere brute power. Its previous history is dark with doubt and mystery, and the questions of its origin and authority form the main subject of the poem.

The Idyll opens with the waste and desolate kingdom of Leodogran, overrun with wild beasts, and devastated by heathen hordes. Leodogran calls on Arthur for help, and Arthur answers the call. While riding by Leodogran's castle, he sees Guinevere, the beautiful daughter of the king, and falls in love with her. Having routed the heathen hosts, and restored the kingdom to Leodogran, he asks the hand of Guinevere in marriage, feeling that with her he may be stronger to lighten the dark land, and make the dead world live. After considerable doubt and deliberation as to Arthur's royal lineage, the king grants his request. Thus stand forth the two central characters of the allegory, Arthur and Guinevere, Soul and Sense, who,

united in the happiness of youth, are to grow more and more apart as life moves on.

The prologue closes with Arthur firmly established on his throne, and married to Guinevere, as the first step in that perfect life which he hopes to make real in the world. He has gathered his victorious Knights about him, bound them by the strictest vows, and organized the Order of the Round Table.

> "A glorious company, the flower of men,
> To serve as models for the mighty world,
> And be the fair beginning of a time."

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

LEODOGRAN, the King of Cameliard,
Had one fair daughter, and none other child;
And she was fairest of all flesh on earth,
Guinevere, and in her his one delight.

For many a petty king ere Arthur came
Ruled in this isle, and ever waging war
Each upon other, wasted all the land;
And still from time to time the heathen host
Swarm'd overseas, and harried what was left.
And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came.
For first Aurelius lived and fought and died,
And after him King Uther fought and died,
But either fail'd to make the kingdom one.
And after these King Arthur for a space,
And thro' the puissance of his Table Round,
Drew all their petty princedoms under him,
Their king and head, and made a realm, and reign'd.

And thus the land of Cameliard was waste,
Thick with wet woods, and many a beast therein,
And none or few to scare or chase the beast;
So that wild dog and wolf and boar and bear

Came night and day, and rooted in the fields,
And wallow'd in the gardens of the King.
And ever and anon the wolf would steal
The children and devour, but now and then,
Her own brood lost or dead, lent her fierce teat
To human sucklings; and the children housed
In her foul den, there at their meat would growl,
And mock their foster-mother on four feet,
Till, straighten'd, they grew up to wolf-like men,
Worse than the wolves. And King Leodogran
Groan'd for the Roman legions here again,
And Cæsar's eagle: then his brother king,
Urien, assail'd him: last a heathen horde,
Reddening the sun with smoke and earth with blood,
And on the spike that split the mother's heart
Spitting the child, break on him, till, amazed,
He knew not whither he should turn for aid.

But — for he heard of Arthur newly crown'd,
Tho' not without an uproar made by those
Who cried, "He is not Uther's son" — the King
Sent to him, saying, "Arise, and help us thou!
For here between the man and beast we die."

And Arthur yet had done no deed of arms,
But heard the call, and came: and Guinevere
Stood by the castle walls to watch him pass;
But since he neither wore on helm or shield
The golden symbol of his kinglihood,
But rode a simple knight among his knights,
And many of these in richer arms than he,
She saw him not, or mark'd not, if she saw,
One among many, tho' his face was bare.
But Arthur, looking downward as he past,
Felt the light of her eyes into his life

Smite on the sudden, yet rode on, and pitch'd
His tents beside the forest. Then he drave
The heathen; after, slew the beast, and fell'd
The forest, letting in the sun, and made
Broad pathways for the hunter and the knight,
And so return'd.

For while he linger'd there,
A doubt that ever smoulder'd in the hearts
Of those great Lords and Barons of his realm
Flash'd forth and into war: for most of these,
Colleaguing with a score of petty kings,
Made head against him, crying, "Who is he
That he should rule us? who hath proven him
King Uther's son? for lo! we look at him,
And find nor face nor bearing, limbs nor voice,
Are like to those of Uther whom we knew.
This is the son of Gorlois, not the King;
This is the son of Anton, not the King."

And Arthur, passing thence to battle, felt
Travail, and throes and agonies of the life,
Desiring to be join'd with Guinevere;
And thinking as he rode, "Her father said
That there between the man and beast they die.
Shall I not lift her from this land of beasts
Up to my throne, and side by side with me?
What happiness to reign a lonely king,
Vext — O ye stars that shudder over me,
O earth that soundest hollow under me,
Vext with waste dreams? for saving I be join'd
To her that is the fairest under heaven,
I seem as nothing in the mighty world,
And cannot will my will, nor work my work
Wholly, nor make myself in mine own realm

Victor and lord. But were I join'd with her,
Then might we live together as one life,
And reigning with one will in everything
Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
And power on this dead world to make it live."

Thereafter — as he speaks who tells the tale —
When Arthur reach'd a field-of-battle bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
Was all so clear about him, that he saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
And even in high day the morning star.
So when the King had set his banner broad,
At once from either side, with trumpet-blast,
And shouts, and clarions shrilling unto blood,
The long-lanced battle let their horses run.
And now the barons and the kings prevail'd,
And now the King, as here and there that war
Went swaying; but the Powers who walk the world
Made lightnings and great thunders over him,
And dazed all eyes, till Arthur by main might,
And mightier of his hands with every blow,
And leading all his knighthood threw the kings
Carádos, Urien, Cradlemont of Wales,
Claudias, and Clariance of Northumberland,
The King Brandagoras of Latangor,
With Anguisant of Erin, Morganore,
And Lot of Orkney. Then, before a voice
As dreadful as the shout of one who sees
To one who sins, and deems himself alone
And all the world asleep, they swerved and brake
Flying, and Arthur call'd to stay the brands
That hack'd among the flyers, "Ho! they yield!"
So like a painted battle the war stood
Silenced, the living quiet as the dead,

And in the heart of Arthur joy was lord.
He laugh'd upon his warrior whom he loved
And honor'd most. "Thou dost not doubt me King,
So well thine arm hath wrought for me to-day."
"Sir and my liege," he cried, "the fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battle-field:
I know thee for my King!" Whereat the two,
For each had warded either in the fight,
Sware on the field of death a deathless love.
And Arthur said, "Man's word is God in man:
Let chance what will, I trust thee to the death."

Then quickly from the foughten field he sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
His new-made knights, to King Leodogran,
Saying, "If I in aught have served thee well,
Give me thy daughter Guinevere to wife."

Whom when he heard, Leodogran in heart
Debating — "How should I that am a king,
However much he holp me at my need,
Give my one daughter saving to a king,
And a king's son?" — lifted his voice, and call'd
A hoary man, his chamberlain, to whom
He trusted all things, and of him required
His counsel: "Knowest thou aught of Arthur's
birth?"

Then spake the hoary chamberlain and said,
"Sir King, there be but two old men that know:
And each is twice as old as I; and one
Is Merlin, the wise man that ever served
King Uther thro' his magic art; and one
Is Merlin's master (so they call him) Bleys,
Who taught him magic; but the scholar ran

Before the master, and so far, that Bleys
Laid magic by, and sat him down, and wrote
All things and whatsoever Merlin did
In one great annal-book, where after-years
Will learn the secret of our Arthur's birth."

To whom the King Leodogran replied,
"O friend, had I been holpen half as well
By this King Arthur as by thee to-day,
Then beast and man had had their share of me:
But summon here before us yet once more
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere."

Then, when they came before him, the King said,
"I have seen the cuckoo chased by lesser fowl,
And reason in the chase: but wherefore now
Do these your lords stir up the heat of war,
Some calling Arthur born of Gorloïs,
Others of Anton? Tell me, ye yourselves,
Hold ye this Arthur for King Uther's son?"

And Ulfius and Brastias answer'd, "Ay."
Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights
Knighted by Arthur at his crowning, spake —
For bold in heart and act and word was he,
Whenever slander breathed against the King —

"Sir, there be many rumors on this head:
For there be those who hate him in their hearts,
Call him baseborn, and since his ways are sweet,
And theirs are bestial, hold him less than man:
And there be those who deem him more than man,
And dream he dropt from heaven: but my belief
In all this matter — so ye care to learn —
Sir, for ye know that in King Uther's time

The prince and warrior Gorloïs, he that held
Tintagil castle by the Cornish sea,
Was wedded with a winsome wife, Ygerne:
And daughters had she borne him, — one whereof,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent,
Hath ever like a loyal sister cleaved
To Arthur, — but a son she had not borne.
And Uther cast upon her eyes of love:
But she, a stainless wife to Gorloïs,
So loathed the bright dishonor of his love,
That Gorloïs and King Uther went to war:
And overthrown was Gorloïs and slain.
Then Uther in his wrath and heat besieged
Ygerne within Tintagil, where her men,
Seeing the mighty swarm about their walls,
Left her and fled, and Uther enter'd in,
And there was none to call to but himself.
So, compass'd by the power of the King,
Enforced she was to wed him in her tears,
And with a shameful swiftness: afterward,
Not many moons, King Uther died himself,
Moaning and wailing for an heir to rule
After him, lest the realm should go to wrack.
And that same night, the night of the new year,
By reason of the bitterness and grief
That vext his mother, all before his time
Was Arthur born, and all as soon as born
Deliver'd at a secret postern-gate
To Merlin, to be holden far apart
Until his hour should come; because the lords
Of that fierce day were as the lords of this,
Wild beasts, and surely would have torn the child
Piecemeal among them, had they known; for each
But sought to rule for his own self and hand,
And many hated Uther for the sake

Of Gorloïs. Wherefore Merlin took the child,
And gave him to Sir Anton, an old knight
An ancient friend of Uther; and his wife
Nursed the young prince, and rear'd him with her own;
And no man knew. And ever since the lords
Have foughten like wild beasts among themselves,
So that the realm has gone to wrack: but now,
This year, when Merlin (for his hour had come)
Brought Arthur forth, and set him in the hall,
Proclaiming, 'Here is Uther's heir, your king,'
A hundred voices cried, 'Away with him!
No king of ours! A son of Gorloïs he,
Or else the child of Anton, and no king,
Or else baseborn.' Yet Merlin thro' his craft,
And while the people clamor'd for a king,
Had Arthur crown'd; but after, the great lords
Banded, and so brake out in open war."

Then while the King debated with himself
If Arthur were the child of shamefulness,
Or born the son of Gorloïs, after death,
Or Uther's son, and born before his time,
Or whether there were truth in anything
Said by these three, there came to Cameliard,
With Gawain and young Modred, her two sons,
Lot's wife, the Queen of Orkney, Bellicent;
Whom as he could, not as he would, the King
Made feast for, saying, as they sat at meat:

"A doubtful throne is ice on summer seas.
Ye come from Arthur's court. Victor his men
Report him! Yea, but ye — think ye this king —
So many those that hate him, and so strong,
So few his knights, however brave they be —
Hath body enow to hold his foemen down?"

"O King," she cried, "and I will tell thee: few,
Few, but all brave, all of one mind with him;
For I was near him when the savage yells
Of Uther's peerage died and Arthur sat
Crown'd on the daïs, and his warriors cried,
'Be thou the king, and we will work thy will
Who love thee.' Then the King in low deep tones,
And simple words of great authority,
Bound them by so strait vows to his own self,
That when they rose, knighted from kneeling, some
Were pale as at the passing of a ghost,
Some flush'd, and others dazed, as one who wakes.
Half-blinded at the coming of a light.

"But when he spake and cheer'd his Table Round
With large, divine and comfortable words,
Beyond my tongue to tell thee — I beheld
From eye to eye thro' all their Order flash
A momentary likeness of the King:
And ere it left their faces, thro' the cross
And those around it and the Crucified,
Down from the casement over Arthur, smote
Flame-color, vert, and azure, in three rays,
One falling upon each of three fair queens,
Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
Sweet faces, who will help him at his need.

"And there I saw mage Merlin, whose vast wit
And hundred winters are but as the hands
Of loyal vassals toiling for their liege.

"And near him stood the Lady of the Lake,
Who knows a subtler magic than his own —
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful.

She gave the King his huge cross-hilted sword,
Whereby to drive the heathen out: a mist
Of incense curl'd about her, and her face
Wellnigh was hidden in the minster gloom;
But there was heard among the holy hymns
A voice as of the waters, for she dwells
Down in a deep, calm, whatsoever storms
May shake the world, and when the surface rolls,
Hath power to walk the waters like our Lord.

"There likewise I beheld Excalibur
Before him at his crowning borne, the sword
That rose from out the bosom of the lake,
And Arthur row'd across and took it — rich
With jewels, elfin Urim, on the hilt,
Bewildering heart and eye — the blade so bright
That men are blinded by it — on one side,
Graven in the oldest tongue of all this world,
'Take me,' but turn the blade and ye shall see,
And written in the speech ye speak yourself,
'Cast me away!' And sad was Arthur's face
Taking it, but old Merlin counsell'd him,
'Take thou and strike! the time to cast away
Is yet far-off.' So this great brand the king
Took, and by this will beat his foemen down."

Thereat Leodogran rejoiced, but thought
To sift his doubtings to the last, and ask'd,
Fixing full eyes of question on her face,
"The swallow and the swift are near akin,
But thou art closer to this noble prince,
Being his own dear sister;" and she said,
"Daughter of Gorloïs and Ygerne am I;"
"And therefore Arthur's sister?" ask'd the King.
She answer'd, "These be secret things," and sign'd

To those two sons to pass and let them be.
And Gawain went, and breaking into song
Sprang out, and follow'd by his flying hair
Ran like a colt, and leapt at all he saw:
But Modred laid his ear beside the doors,
And there half heard; the same that afterward
Struck for the throne, and striking found his doom.

And then the Queen made answer, "What know I?
For dark my mother was in eyes and hair,
And dark in hair and eyes am I; and dark
Was Gorloïs, yea and dark was Uther too,
Wellnigh to blackness; but this King is fair
Beyond the race of Britons and of men.
Moreover, always in my mind I hear
A cry from out the dawning of my life,
A mother weeping, and I hear her say,
'O that ye had some brother, pretty one,
To guard thee on the rough ways of the world.'"

"Ay," said the King, "and hear ye such a cry?
But when did Arthur chance upon thee first?"

"O King!" she cried, "and I will tell thee true:
He found me first when yet a little maid:
Beaten I had been for a little fault
Whereof I was not guilty; and out I ran
And flung myself down on a bank of heath,
And hated this fair world and all therein,
And wept and wish'd that I were dead; and he—
I know not whether of himself he came,
Or brought by Merlin, who, they say, can walk
Unseen at pleasure — he was at my side,
And spake sweet words, and comforted my heart,
And dried my tears, being a child with me.

And many a time he came, and evermore
As I grew greater grew with me; and sad
At times he seem'd, and sad with him was I,
Stern too at times, and then I loved him not,
But sweet again, and then I loved him well.
And now of late I see him less and less,
But those first days had golden hours for me,
For then I surely thought he would be king.

"But let me tell thee now another tale:
For Bleys, our Merlin's master, as they say,
Died but of late, and sent his cry to me,
To hear him speak before he left his life.
Shrunk like a fairy changeling lay the mage;
And when I enter'd told me that himself
And Merlin ever served about the King,
Uther, before he died; and on the night
When Uther in Tintagil past away
Moaning and wailing for an heir, the two
Left the still King, and passing forth to breathe,
Then from the castle gateway by the chasm
Descending thro' the dismal night — a night
In which the bounds of heaven and earth were lost —
Beheld, so high upon the dreary deeps
It seem'd in heaven, a ship, the shape thereof
A dragon wing'd, and all from stem to stern
Bright with a shining people on the decks,
And gone as soon as seen. And then the two
Dropt to the cove, and watch'd the great sea fall,
Wave after wave, each mightier than the last,
Till last, a ninth one, gathering half the deep
And full of voices, slowly rose and plunged
Roaring, and all the wave was in a flame:
And down the wave and in the flame was borne
A naked babe, and rode to Merlin's feet,

Who stoopt and caught the babe, and cried 'The King!
Here is an heir for Uther!' And the fringe
Of that great breaker, sweeping up the strand,
Lash'd at the wizard as he spake the word,
And all at once all round him rose in fire,
So that the child and he were clothed in fire.
And presently thereafter follow'd calm,
Free sky and stars: 'And this same child,' he said,
'Is he who reigns: nor could I part in peace
Till this were told.' And saying this the seer
Went thro' the strait and dreadful pass of death,
Not ever to be question'd any more
Save on the further side; but when I met
Merlin, and ask'd him if these things were truth—
The shining dragon and the naked child
Descending in the glory of the seas—
He laugh'd as is his wont, and answer'd me
In riddling triplets of old time, and said:

"'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow in the sky!
A young man will be wiser by and by;
An old man's wit may wander ere he die.

"'Rain, rain, and sun! a rainbow on the lea!
And truth is this to me, and that to thee;
And truth or clothed or naked let it be.

"'Rain, sun, and rain! and the free blossom blows:
Sun, rain, and sun! and where is he who knows?
From the great deep to the great deep he goes.'

"So Merlin riddling anger'd me; but thou
Fear not to give this King thine only child,
Guinevere: so great bards of him will sing
Hereafter; and dark sayings from of old

Ranging and ringing thro' the minds of men,
And echo'd by old folk beside their fires
For comfort after their wage-work is done,
Speak of the King; and Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn
Tho' men may wound him that he will not die,
But pass, again to come; and then or now
Utterly smite the heathen underfoot,
Till these and all men hail him for their king."

She spake and King Leodogran rejoiced,
But musing "Shall I answer yea or nay?"
Doubted and drowsed, nodded and slept, and saw,
Dreaming, a slope of land that ever grew,
Field after field, up to a height, the peak
Haze-hidden, and thereon a phantom king,
Now looming, and now lost: and on the slope
The sword rose, the hind fell, the herd was driven,
Fire glimpsed; and all the land from roof and rick,
In drifts of smoke before a rolling wind,
Stream'd to the peak, and mingled with the haze
And made it thicker; while the phantom king
Sent out at times a voice; and here or there
Stood one who pointed toward the voice, the rest
Slew on and burnt, crying, "No king of ours,
No son of Uther, and no king of ours;"
Till with a wink his dream was changed, the haze
Descended, and the solid earth became
As nothing, but the king stood out in heaven,
Crown'd. And Leodogran awoke, and sent
Ulfius, and Brastias, and Bedivere,
Back to the court of Arthur answering yea.

Then Arthur charged his warrior whom he loved
And honor'd most, Sir Lancelot, to ride forth

And bring the Queen; — and watch'd him from the gates;
And Lancelot past away among the flowers,
(For then was latter April) and return'd
Among the flowers, in May, with Guinevere.
To whom arrived, by Dubric the high saint,
Chief of the church in Britain, and before
The stateliest of her altar-shrines, the King
That morn was married, while in stainless white,
The fair beginners of a nobler time,
And glorying in their vows and him, his knights
Stood round him, and rejoicing in his joy.
Far shone the fields of May thro' open door,
The sacred altar blossom'd white with May,
The Sun of May descended on their King,
They gazed on all earth's beauty in their Queen,
Roll'd incense, and there past along the hymns
A voice as of the waters, while the two
Sware at the shrine of Christ a deathless love:
And Arthur said, "Behold, thy doom is mine.
Let chance what will, I love thee to the death!"
To whom the Queen replied with drooping eyes,
"King and my lord, I love thee to the death!"
And holy Dubric spread his hands and spake,
"Reign ye, and live and love, and make the world
Other, and may thy Queen be one with thee,
And all this Order of thy Table Round
Fulfil the boundless purpose of their King!"

So Dubric said; but when they left the shrine
Great Lords from Rome before the portal stood,
In scornful stillness gazing as they past;
Then while they paced a city all on fire
With sun and cloth of gold, the trumpets blew,
And Arthur's knighthood sang before the King: —

"Blow trumpet, for the world is white with May;
Blow trumpet, the long night hath roll'd away!
Blow thro' the living world — 'Let the King reign.'

"Shall Rome or heathen rule in Arthur's realm?
Flash brand and lance, fall battleaxe upon helm,
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and live! his knights have heard
That God hath told the King a secret word.
Fall battleaxe, and flash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Strike for the King and die! and if thou diest,
The King is King, and ever wills the highest.
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"Blow, for our Sun is mighty in his May!
Blow, for our Sun is mightier day by day!
Clang battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign.

"The King will follow Christ, and we the King,
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.
Fall battleaxe, and clash brand! Let the King reign."

So sang the knighthood, moving to their hall.
There at the banquet those great Lords from Rome,
The slowly-fading mistress of the world,
Strode in, and claim'd their tribute as of yore.
But Arthur spake, "Behold, for these have sworn
To wage my wars, and worship me their King;
The old order changeth, yielding place to new;

And we that fight for our fair father Christ,
Seeing that ye be grown too weak and old
To drive the heathen from your Roman wall,
No tribute will we pay:" so those great lords
Drew back in wrath, and Arthur strove with Rome.

And Arthur and his knighthood for a space
Were all one will, and thro' that strength the King
Drew in the petty princedoms under him,
Fought, and in twelve great battles overcame
The heathen hordes, and made a realm and reign'd.

INTRODUCTION TO "GARETH AND LYNETTE."

"Gareth and Lynette" represents the golden age of Arthur's reign, when the Round Table seemed indeed a model for the world, and Arthur himself the representative of Christ upon earth. No taint of sin has yet crept into the Order, and the name of Guinevere is not mentioned in the poem. The warriors are loyal to their vows and to their King. It is a period

> "When every morning brought a noble chance,
> And every chance brought out a noble knight."

In this picture Arthur sits on his judgment seat and delivers justice. Wrongs are sure of redress, and valiant knights go forth each day to deliver the weak from the oppressor. Young men of noble birth, whom Arthur's character has inspired to noble deeds, come to his court seeking knighthood and high adventure. Gareth himself is a type of this youthful chivalry in perfection. He is the image of his time, representing the youthful craving for honor, spoiled by no meaner motive than ambition. He is the embodiment of the Arthurian kingdom in its youthful energy and purity. Full of courage, and the unquenchable faith of youth, borne along on the first wave of enthusiasm, he does not mind the drudgery of the kitchen, the taunts of Sir Kay, or the

mocking of Lynette. The crowning glory of his ambition is to be counted a knight of Arthur,

> "Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King—
> Else, wherefore born?"

Lynette is the first of the types of womanhood to be drawn by Tennyson in the Idylls. She is a fresh and frank young woman, thoughtless, quick-tongued, and rude, — but pure and honorable. She is of the petulant, impatient type. Her sauciness lacks charm, because there is too much masculine roughness about it. Her character is not consistent. At one time she is saucy, rude, and lacking in earnestness; at another, refined and full of sentiment, singing charming songs which seem out of keeping with her previous nature. She seems to be two women in one; yet, in spite of the inconsistencies, there is a freshness and vivacity about the young woman that attracts and pleases us.

The story of the Idyll as far as line 430 is probably Tennyson's own invention, but from this point he follows Malory's account in the seventh book of "Morte Darthur." The poem is replete with allegory; not only does it, as a whole, represent the first stage of the main theme, the springtime of life, and the strength and hope of youth, but it contains within itself many independent allegories. Arthur's city and its gates are allegorical. The utterances of Merlin are riddling presentments of the allegory. Gareth's successive combats with the knights at the ford of the river symbolize the war of time against the soul of man, shadowing forth the whole struggle involved in the course of human life.

In this Idyll the author does not appear at his best; although there is much to commend, the poem falls below the high standard set by the poet in preceding idylls. It is fresh and animated in tone, and harmonizes well with its general position and design. It contains many fine descriptions, which are admirable specimens of scene painting. The descriptions of Arthur's city and the mystic gate, the meeting with Merlin, the warriors who guard the river, and finally the encounter with Death are excellent. We are indebted to Tennyson also for his happy use of fine old English words and expressions. The scenes between Gareth and his mother, however, are much too long and tedious. We cannot reconcile our æsthetic sense to the incredible kitchen part of the story. The coarse taunts of Lynette are hardly in keeping with the delicate songs she sings, and the refinement and sentiment she displays at times. The verse often seems cramped for want of necessary conjunctions, while here and there are interspersed lines of a redundant nature. The frequent alliteration and play upon words palls on the ear, and at times the poet indulges in excessive reiteration. On the whole, however, the fine inventions, the vivid pictures, and the richness of expression throw a magical glamour over the poem, which raises it at once above the commonplace.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

THE last tall son of Lot and Bellicent,
And tallest, Gareth, in a showerful spring
Stared at the spate. A slender-shafted pine
Lost footing, fell, and so was whirl'd away.
"How he went down," said Gareth, "as a false knight
Or evil king before my lance, if lance
Were mine to use — O senseless cataract,
Bearing all down in thy precipitancy —
And yet thou art but swollen with cold snows
And mine is living blood: thou dost His will,
The Maker's, and not knowest, and I that know,
Have strength and wit, in my good mother's hall
Linger with vacillating obedience,
Prison'd, and kept and coax'd and whistled to —
Since the good mother holds me still a child!
Good mother is bad mother unto me!
A worse were better; yet no worse would I.
Heaven yield her for it, but in me put force
To weary her ears with one continuous prayer,
Until she let me fly discaged to sweep
In ever-highering eagle-circles up
To the great Sun of Glory, and thence swoop
Down upon all things base, and dash them dead,
A knight of Arthur, working out his will,
To cleanse the world. Why, Gawain, when he came

With Modred hither in the summer-time,
Ask'd me to tilt with him, the proven knight.
Modred for want of worthier was the judge.
Then I so shook him in the saddle, he said,
'Thou hast half prevail'd against me,' said so — he —
Tho' Modred biting his thin lips was mute,
For he is alway sullen: what care I?"

And Gareth went, and hovering round her chair
Ask'd, "Mother, tho' ye count me still the child,
Sweet mother, do ye love the child?" She laugh'd,
"Thou art but a wild-goose to question it."
"Then, mother, an ye love the child," he said,
"Being a goose and rather tame than wild,
Hear the child's story." "Yea, my well-beloved,
An 't were but of the goose and golden eggs."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
"Nay, nay, good mother, but this egg of mine
Was finer gold than any goose can lay;
For this an eagle, a royal eagle, laid
Almost beyond eye-reach, on such a palm
As glitters gilded in thy Book of Hours.
And there was ever haunting round the palm
A lusty youth, but poor, who often saw
The splendor sparkling from aloft, and thought,
'An I could climb and lay my hand upon it,
Then were I wealthier than a leash of kings.'
But ever when he reach'd a hand to climb,
One that had loved him from his childhood caught
And stay'd him, 'Climb not lest thou break thy neck,
I charge thee by my love,' and so the boy,
Sweet mother, neither clomb nor brake his neck,
But brake his very heart in pining for it,
And past away."

To whom the mother said,
"True love, sweet son, had risk'd himself and climb'd,
And handed down the golden treasure to him."

And Gareth answer'd her with kindling eyes:
"Gold? said I gold? — ay then, why he, or she,
Or whosoe'er it was, or half the world
Had ventured — *had* the thing I spake of been
Mere gold — but this was all of that true steel
Whereof they forged the brand Excalibur,
And lightnings play'd about it in the storm,
And all the little fowl were flurried at it,
And there were cries and clashings in the nest,
That sent him from his senses: let me go."

Then Bellicent bemoan'd herself and said
"Hast thou no pity upon my loneliness?
Lo, where thy father Lot beside the hearth
Lies like a log, and all but smoulder'd out!
For ever since when traitor to the King
He fought against him in the barons' war,
And Arthur gave him back his territory,
His age hath slowly droopt, and now lies there
A yet-warm corpse, and yet unburiable,
No more; nor sees, nor hears, nor speaks, nor knows.
And both thy brethren are in Arthur's hall,
Albeit neither loved with that full love
I feel for thee, nor worthy such a love.
Stay therefore thou; red berries charm the bird,
And thee, mine innocent, the jousts, the wars,
Who never knewest finger-ache, nor pang
Of wrench'd or broken limb — an often chance
In those brain-stunning shocks, and tourney-falls,
Frights to my heart; but stay: follow the deer
By these tall firs and our fast-falling burns;

So make thy manhood mightier day by day;
Sweet is the chase: and I will seek thee out
Some comfortable bride and fair, to grace
Thy climbing life, and cherish my prone year,
Till falling into Lot's forgetfulness
I know not thee, myself, nor anything.
Stay, my best son! ye are yet more boy than man."

Then Gareth: "An ye hold me yet for child,
Hear yet once more the story of the child.
For, mother, there was once a king, like ours.
The prince his heir, when tall and marriageable,
Ask'd for a bride; and thereupon the king
Set two before him. One was fair, strong, arm'd —
But to be won by force — and many men
Desired her; one, good lack, no man desired.
And these were the conditions of the king:
That save he won the first by force, he needs
Must wed that other, whom no man desired,
A red-faced bride who knew herself so vile
That evermore she long'd to hide herself,
Nor fronted man or woman, eye to eye —
Yea — some she cleaved to, but they died of her.
And one — they call'd her Fame; and one — O mother,
How can ye keep me tether'd to you? — Shame.
Man am I grown, a man's work must I do.
Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King,
Live pure, speak true, right wrong, follow the King —
Else, wherefore born?"

To whom the mother said:
"Sweet son, for there be many who deem him not,
Or will not deem him, wholly proven King —
Albeit in mine own heart I knew him King
When I was frequent with him in my youth,

And heard him kingly speak, and doubted him
No more than he, himself; but felt him mine,
Of closest kin to me: yet — wilt thou leave
Thine easeful biding here, and risk thine all,
Life, limbs, for one that is not proven King?
Stay, till the cloud that settles round his birth
Hath lifted but a little. Stay, sweet son."

And Gareth answer'd quickly: "Not an hour,
So that ye yield me — I will walk thro' fire,
Mother, to gain it — your full leave to go.
Not proven, who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome
From off the threshold of the realm, and crush'd
The idolaters, and made the people free?
Who should be king save him who makes us free?"

So when the Queen, who long had sought in vain
To break him from the intent to which he grew,
Found her son's will unwaveringly one,
She answer'd craftily: "Will ye walk thro' fire?
Who walks thro' fire will hardly heed the smoke.
Ay, go then, an ye must: only one proof,
Before thou ask the King to make thee knight,
Of thine obedience and thy love to me,
Thy mother, — I demand."

And Gareth cried:
"A hard one, or a hundred, so I go.
Nay — quick! the proof to prove me to the quick!"

But slowly spake the mother looking at him:
"Prince, thou shalt go disguised to Arthur's hall,
And hire thyself to serve for meats and drinks
Among the scullions and the kitchen-knaves,
And those that hand the dish across the bar.

Nor shalt thou tell thy name to any one.
And thou shalt serve a twelvemonth and a day."

For so the Queen believed that when her son
Beheld his only way to glory lead
Low down thro' villain kitchen-vassalage,
Her own true Gareth was too princely-proud
To pass thereby; so should he rest with her,
Closed in her castle from the sound of arms.

Silent awhile was Gareth, then replied:
"The thrall in person may be free in soul,
And I shall see the jousts. Thy son am I,
And, since thou art my mother, must obey.
I therefore yield me freely to thy will;
For hence will I, disguised, and hire myself
To serve with scullions and with kitchen-knaves;
Nor tell my name to any — no, not the King."

Gareth awhile linger'd. The mother's eye
Full of the wistful fear that he would go,
And turning toward him wheresoe'er he turn'd,
Perplext his outward purpose, till an hour
When, waken'd by the wind which with full voice
Swept bellowing thro' the darkness on to dawn,
He rose, and out of slumber calling two
That still had tended on him from his birth,
Before the wakeful mother heard him, went.

The three were clad like tillers of the soil.
Southward they set their faces. The birds made
Melody on branch and melody in mid air.
The damp hill-slopes were quicken'd into green,
And the live green had kindled into flowers,
For it was past the time of Easter-day.

So, when their feet were planted on the plain
That broaden'd toward the base of Camelot,
Far off they saw the silver-misty morn
Rolling her smoke about the royal mount,
That rose between the forest and the field.
At times the summit of the high city flash'd;
At times the spires and turrets half-way down
Prick'd thro' the mist; at times the great gate shone
Only, that open'd on the field below:
Anon, the whole fair city had disappear'd.

Then those who went with Gareth were amazed,
One crying, "Let us go no further, lord:
Here is a city of enchanters, built
By fairy kings." The second echo'd him,
"Lord, we have heard from our wise man at home
To northward, that this king is not the King,
But only changeling out of Fairyland,
Who drave the heathen hence by sorcery
And Merlin's glamour." Then the first again,
"Lord, there is no such city anywhere,
But all a vision."

Gareth answer'd them
With laughter, swearing he had glamour enow
In his own blood, his princedom, youth, and hopes,
To plunge old Merlin in the Arabian sea;
So push'd them all unwilling toward the gate.
And there was no gate like it under heaven.
For barefoot on the keystone, which was lined
And rippled like an ever-fleeting wave,
The Lady of the Lake stood; all her dress
Wept from her sides as water flowing away;
But like the cross her great and goodly arms
Stretch'd under all the cornice and upheld:

And drops of water fell from either hand;
And down from one a sword was hung, from one
A censer, either worn with wind and storm;
And o'er her breast floated the sacred fish;
And in the space to left of her, and right,
Were Arthur's wars in weird devices done,
New things and old co-twisted, as if Time
Were nothing, so inveterately that men
Were giddy gazing there; and over all
High on the top were those three queens, the friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need.

Then those with Gareth for so long a space
Stared at the figures that at last it seem'd
The dragon-boughts and elvish emblemings
Began to move, seethe, twine, and curl: they call'd
To Gareth, "Lord, the gateway is alive."

And Gareth likewise on them fixt his eyes
So long that even to him they seem'd to move.
Out of the city a blast of music peal'd.
Back from the gate started the three, to whom
From out thereunder came an ancient man,
Long-bearded, saying, "Who be ye, my sons?"

Then Gareth: "We be tillers of the soil,
Who leaving share in furrow come to see
The glories of our King: but these, my men,—
Your city moved so weirdly in the mist—
Doubt if the King be king at all, or come
From Fairyland; and whether this be built
By magic, and by fairy kings and queens;
Or whether there be any city at all,
Or all a vision: and this music now
Hath scared them both, but tell thou these the truth."

Then that old Seer made answer, playing on him
And saying: "Son, I have seen the good ship sail
Keel upward, and mast downward, in the heavens,
And solid turrets topsy-turvy in the air:
And here is truth; but an it please thee not,
Take thou the truth as thou hast told it me.
For truly, as thou sayest, a fairy king
And fairy queens have built the city, son;
They came from out a sacred mountain cleft
Toward the sunrise, each with harp in hand,
And built it to the music of their harps.
And, as thou sayest, it is enchanted, son,
For there is nothing in it as it seems
Saving the King; tho' some there be that hold
The King a shadow, and the city real:
Yet take thou heed of him, for, so thou pass
Beneath this archway, then wilt thou become
A thrall to his enchantments, for the King
Will bind thee by such vows as is a shame
A man should not be bound by, yet the which
No man can keep; but, so thou dread to swear,
Pass not beneath this gateway, but abide
Without, among the cattle of the field.
For an ye heard a music, like enow
They are building still, seeing the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever."

Gareth spake
Anger'd: "Old master, reverence thine own beard
That looks as white as utter truth, and seems
Wellnigh as long as thou art statured tall!
Why mockest thou the stranger that hath been
To thee fair-spoken?"

But the Seer replied:
"Know ye not then the Riddling of the Bards:
'Confusion, and illusion, and relation,
Elusion, and occasion, and evasion?'
I mock thee not but as thou mockest me,
And all that see thee, for thou art not who
Thou seemest, but I know thee who thou art.
And now thou goest up to mock the King,
Who cannot brook the shadow of any lie."

Unmockingly the mocker ending here
Turn'd to the right, and past along the plain;
Whom Gareth looking after said; "My men,
Our one white lie sits like a little ghost
Here on the threshold of our enterprise.
Let love be blamed for it, not she, nor I:
Well, we will make amends."

With all good cheer
He spake and laugh'd, then enter'd with his twain
Camelot, a city of shadowy palaces
And stately, rich in emblem and the work
Of ancient kings who did their days in stone;
Which Merlin's hand, the Mage at Arthur's court,
Knowing all arts, had touch'd, and everywhere,
At Arthur's ordinance, tipt with lessening peak
And pinnacle, and had made it spire to heaven.
And ever and anon a knight would pass
Outward, or inward to the hall: his arms
Clash'd; and the sound was good to Gareth's ear.
And out of bower and casement shyly glanced
Eyes of pure women, wholesome stars of love;
And all about a healthful people stept
As in the presence of a gracious king.

Then into hall Gareth ascending heard
A voice, the voice of Arthur, and beheld
Far over heads in that long-vaulted hall
The splendor of the presence of the King
Throned, and delivering doom — and look'd no more —
But felt his young heart hammering in his ears
And thought, "For this half-shadow of a lie
The truthful King will doom me when I speak."
Yet pressing on, tho' all in fear to find
Sir Gawain or Sir Modred, saw nor one
Nor other, but in all the listening eyes
Of those tall knights that ranged about the throne
Clear honor shining like the dewy star
Of dawn, and faith in their great King, with pure
Affection, and the light of victory,
And glory gain'd, and evermore to gain.

Then came a widow crying to the King:
"A boon, Sir King? Thy father, Uther, reft
From my dead lord a field with violence;
For howsoe'er at first he proffer'd gold,
Yet, for the field was pleasant in our eyes,
We yielded not; and then he reft us of it
Perforce and left us neither gold nor field."

Said Arthur, "Whether would ye? gold or field?"
To whom the woman weeping, "Nay, my lord,
The field was pleasant in my husband's eye."

And Arthur: "Have thy pleasant field again,
And thrice the gold for Uther's use thereof,
According to the years. No boon is here,
But justice, so thy say be proven true.

Accursed, who from the wrongs his father did
Would shape himself a right!"

And while she past,
Came yet another widow crying to him:
"A boon, Sir King! Thine enemy, King, am I.
With thine own hand thou slewest my dear lord,
A knight of Uther in the barons' war,
When Lot and many another rose and fought
Against thee, saying thou wert basely born.
I held with these, and loathe to ask thee aught.
Yet lo! my husband's brother had my son
Thrall'd in his castle, and hath starved him dead,
And standeth seized of that inheritance
Which thou that slewest the sire hast left the son.
So, tho' I scarce can ask it thee for hate,
Grant me some knight to do the battle for me,
Kill the foul thief, and wreak me for my son."

Then strode a good knight forward, crying to him,
"A boon, Sir King! I am her kinsman, I.
Give me to right her wrong, and slay the man."

Then came Sir Kay, the seneschal, and cried,
"A boon, Sir King! even that thou grant her none,
This railer, that hath mock'd thee in full hall —
None; or the wholesome boon of gyve and gag."

But Arthur: "We sit King, to help the wrong'd
Thro' all our realm. The woman loves her lord.
Peace to thee, woman, with thy loves and hates!
The kings of old had doom'd thee to the flames;
Aurelius Emrys would have scourged thee dead,
And Uther slit thy tongue: but get thee hence —
Lest that rough humor of the kings of old

Return upon me! Thou that art her kin,
Go likewise; lay him low and slay him not,
But bring him here, that I may judge the right,
According to the justice of the King:
Then, be he guilty, by that deathless King
Who lived and died for men, the man shall die."

Then came in hall the messenger of Mark,
A name of evil savor in the land,
The Cornish king. In either hand he bore
What dazzled all, and shone far-off as shines
A field of charlock in the sudden sun
Between two showers, a cloth of palest gold,
Which down he laid before the throne, and knelt,
Delivering that his lord, the vassal king,
Was ev'n upon his way to Camelot;
For having heard that Arthur of his grace
Had made his goodly cousin Tristram knight,
And, for himself was of the greater state,
Being a king, he trusted his liege-lord
Would yield him this large honor all the more;
So pray'd him well to accept this cloth of gold,
In token of true heart and fealty.

Then Arthur cried to rend the cloth, to rend
In pieces, and so cast it on the hearth.
An oak-tree smoulder'd there. "The goodly knight!
What! shall the shield of Mark stand among these?"
For, midway down the side of that long hall,
A stately pile, — whereof along the front,
Some blazon'd, some but carven, and some blank,
There ran a treble range of stony shields, —
Rose, and high-arching overbrow'd the hearth.
And under every shield a knight was named.
For this was Arthur's custom in his hall:

When some good knight had done one noble deed,
His arms were carven only; but if twain,
His arms were blazon'd also; but if none,
The shield was blank and bare, without a sign
Saving the name beneath: and Gareth saw
The shield of Gawain blazon'd rich and bright,
And Modred's blank as death; and Arthur cried
To rend the cloth and cast it on the hearth.

"More like are we to reave him of his crown
Than make him knight because men call him king.
The kings we found, ye know we stay'd their hands
From war among themselves, but left them kings;
Of whom were any bounteous, merciful,
Truth-speaking, brave, good livers, them we enroll'd
Among us, and they sit within our hall.
But Mark hath tarnish'd the great name of king,
As Mark would sully the low state of churl;
And, seeing he hath sent us cloth of gold,
Return, and meet, and hold him from our eyes,
Lest we should lap him up in cloth of lead,
Silenced for ever — craven — a man of plots,
Craft, poisonous counsels, wayside ambushings —
No fault of thine: let Kay the seneschal
Look to thy wants, and send thee satisfied —
Accursed, who strikes nor lets the hand be seen!"

And many another suppliant crying came
With noise of ravage wrought by beast and man,
And evermore a knight would ride away.

Last, Gareth leaning both hands heavily
Down on the shoulders of the twain, his men,
Approach'd between them toward the King, and ask'd,
"A boon, Sir King," — his voice was all ashamed, —

"For see ye not how weak and hunger-worn
I seem — leaning on these? grant me to serve
For meat and drink among thy kitchen-knaves
A twelvemonth and a day, nor seek my name.
Hereafter I will fight."

To him the King:
"A goodly youth and worth a goodlier boon!
But so thou wilt no goodlier, then must Kay,
The master of the meats and drinks, be thine."

He rode and past; then Kay, a man of mien
Wan-sallow as the plant that feels itself
Root-bitten by white lichen:

"Lo ye now!
This fellow hath broken from some abbey, where,
God wot, he had not beef and brewis enow,
However that might chance! but an he work,
Like any pigeon will I cram his crop,
And sleeker shall he shine than any hog."

Then Lancelot standing near: "Sir Seneschal,
Sleuth-hound thou knowest, and gray, and all the hounds;
A horse thou knowest, a man thou dost not know:
Broad brows and fair, a fluent hair and fine,
High nose, a nostril large and fine, and hands
Large, fair, and fine! — Some young lad's mystery —
But, or from sheepcot or king's hall, the boy
Is noble-natured. Treat him with all grace,
Lest he should come to shame thy judging of him."

Then Kay: "What murmurest thou of mystery?
Think ye this fellow will poison the King's dish?
Nay, for he spake too fool-like: mystery!

Tut, an the lad were noble, he had ask'd
For horse and armor: fair and fine, forsooth!
Sir Fine-face, Sir Fair-hands? but see thou to it
That thine own fineness, Lancelot, some fine day
Undo thee not — and leave my man to me."

So Gareth all for glory underwent
The sooty yoke of kitchen-vassalage,
Ate with young lads his portion by the door,
And couch'd at night with grimy kitchen-knaves.
And Lancelot ever spake him pleasantly,
But Kay the seneschal, who loved him not,
Would hustle and harry him, and labor him
Beyond his comrade of the hearth, and set
To turn the broach, draw water, or hew wood,
Or grosser tasks; and Gareth bow'd himself
With all obedience to the King, and wrought
All kind of service with a noble ease
That graced the lowliest act in doing it.
And when the thralls had talk among themselves,
And one would praise the love that linkt the King
And Lancelot — how the King had saved his life
In battle twice, and Lancelot once the King's —
For Lancelot was first in the tournament,
But Arthur mightiest on the battlefield —
Gareth was glad. Or if some other told
How once the wandering forester at dawn,
Far over the blue tarns and hazy seas,
On Caer-Eryri's highest found the King,
A naked babe, of whom the Prophet spake,
"He passes to the Isle Avilion,
He passes and is heal'd and cannot die" —
Gareth was glad. But if their talk were foul,
Then would he whistle rapid as any lark,
Or carol some old roundelay, and so loud

That first they mock'd, but, after, reverenced him.
Or Gareth, telling some prodigious tale
Of knights who sliced a red life-bubbling way
Thro' twenty folds of twisted dragon, held
All in a gap-mouth'd circle his good mates
Lying or sitting round him, idle hands,
Charm'd; till Sir Kay, the seneschal, would come
Blustering upon them, like a sudden wind
Among dead leaves, and drive them all apart.
Or when the thralls had sport among themselves,
So there were any trial of mastery,
He, by two yards in casting bar or stone,
Was counted best; and if there chanced a joust,
So that Sir Kay nodded him leave to go,
Would hurry thither, and when he saw the knights
Clash like the coming and retiring wave,
And the spear spring, and good horse reel, the boy
Was half beyond himself for ecstasy.

So for a month he wrought among the thralls;
But in the weeks that follow'd, the good Queen,
Repentant of the word she made him swear,
And saddening in her childless castle, sent,
Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon,
Arms for her son, and loosed him from his vow.

This, Gareth hearing from a squire of Lot
With whom he used to play at tourney once,
When both were children, and in lonely haunts
Would scratch a ragged oval on the sand,
And each at either dash from either end —
Shame never made girl redder than Gareth joy.
He laugh'd; he sprang. "Out of the smoke, at once
I leap from Satan's foot to Peter's knee —
These news be mine, none other's — nay, the King's —

Descend into the city:" whereon he sought
The King alone, and found, and told him all.

"I have stagger'd thy strong Gawain in a tilt
For pastime; yea, he said it: joust can I.
Make me thy knight — in secret! let my name
Be hidd'n, and give me the first quest, I spring
Like flame from ashes."

Here the King's calm eye
Fell on, and check'd, and made him flush, and bow
Lowly, to kiss his hand, who answer'd him:
"Son, the good mother let me know thee here,
And sent her wish that I would yield thee thine.
Make thee my knight? my knights are sworn to vows
Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
And uttermost obedience to the King."

Then Gareth, lightly springing from his knees:
"My King, for hardihood I can promise thee.
For uttermost obedience make demand
Of whom ye gave me to, the Seneschal,
No mellow master of the meats and drinks!
And as for love, God wot, I love not yet,
But love I shall, God willing."

And the King:
"Make thee my knight in secret? yea, but he,
Our noblest brother, and our truest man,
And one with me in all, he needs must know."

"Let Lancelot know, my King, let Lancelot know,
Thy noblest and thy truest!"

And the King:
"But wherefore would ye men should wonder at you?
Nay, rather for the sake of me, their King,
And the deed's sake my knighthood do the deed,
Than to be noised of."

Merrily Gareth ask'd:
"Have I not earn'd my cake in baking of it?
Let be my name until I make my name!
My deeds will speak: it is but for a day."
So with a kindly hand on Gareth's arm
Smiled the great King, and half-unwillingly
Loving his lusty youthhood yielded to him.
Then, after summoning Lancelot privily:
"I have given him the first quest: he is not proven.
Look therefore, when he calls for this in hall,
Thou get to horse and follow him far away.
Cover the lions on thy shield, and see,
Far as thou mayest, he be nor ta'en nor slain."

Then that same day there past into the hall
A damsel of high lineage, and a brow
May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom,
Hawk-eyes; and lightly was her slender nose
Tip-tilted like the petal of a flower:
She into hall past with her page and cried:

"O King, for thou hast driven the foe without,
See to the foe within! bridge, ford, beset
By bandits, every one that owns a tower
The lord for half a league. Why sit ye there?
Rest would I not, Sir King, an I were king,
Till even the lonest hold were all as free
From cursed bloodshed as thine altar-cloth
From that best blood it is a sin to spill."

"Comfort thyself," said Arthur, "I nor mine
Rest: so my knighthood keep the vows they swore,
The wastest moorland of our realm shall be
Safe, damsel, as the centre of this hall.
What is thy name? thy need?"

"My name?" she said —
"Lynette, my name; noble; my need, a knight
To combat for my sister, Lyonors,
A lady of high lineage, of great lands,
And comely, yea, and comelier than myself.
She lives in Castle Perilous: a river
Runs in three loops about her living-place;
And o'er it are three passings, and three knights
Defend the passings, brethren, and a fourth,
And of that four the mightiest, holds her stay'd
In her own castle, and so besieges her
To break her will, and make her wed with him;
And but delays his purport till thou send
To do the battle with him thy chief man
Sir Lancelot, whom he trusts to overthrow;
Then wed, with glory: but she will not wed
Save whom she loveth, or a holy life.
Now therefore have I come for Lancelot."

Then Arthur mindful of Sir Gareth ask'd:
"Damsel, ye know this Order lives to crush
All wrongers of the realm. But say, these four,
Who be they? What the fashion of the men?"

"They be of foolish fashion, O Sir King,
The fashion of that old knight-errantry
Who ride abroad, and do but what they will;
Courteous or bestial from the moment, such
As have nor law nor king; and three of these

Proud in their fantasy call themselves the Day,
Morning-Star, and Noon-Sun, and Evening-Star,
Being strong fools; and never a whit more wise
The fourth, who alway rideth arm'd in black,
A huge man-beast of boundless savagery.
He names himself the Night and oftener Death.
And wears a helmet mounted with a skull,
And bears a skeleton figured on his arms,
To show that who may slay or scape the three,
Slain by himself, shall enter endless night.
And all these four be fools, but mighty men,
And therefore am I come for Lancelot."

Hearat Sir Gareth call'd from where he rose,
A head with kindling eyes above the throng,
"A boon, Sir King — this quest!" then — for he
mark'd
Kay near him groaning like a wounded bull —
"Yea, King, thou knowest thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I,
And I can topple over a hundred such.
Thy promise, King," and Arthur glancing at him,
Brought down a momentary brow. "Rough, sudden,
And pardonable, worthy to be knight —
Go therefore," and all hearers were amazed.

But on the damsel's forehead shame, pride, wrath
Slew the may-white: she lifted either arm,
"Fie on thee, King! I ask'd for thy chief knight,
And thou hast given me but a kitchen-knave."
Then ere a man in hall could stay her, turn'd,
Fled down the lane of access to the King,
Took horse, descended the slope street, and past
The weird white gate, and paused without, beside
The field of tourney, murmuring "kitchen-knave!"

Now two great entries open'd from the hall,
At one end one that gave upon a range
Of level pavement where the King would pace
At sunrise, gazing over plain and wood;
And down from this a lordly stairway sloped
Till lost in blowing trees and tops of towers;
And out by this main doorway past the King.
But one was counter to the hearth, and rose
High that the highest-crested helm could ride
Therethro' nor graze; and by this entry fled
The damsel in her wrath, and on to this
Sir Gareth strode, and saw without the door
King Arthur's gift, the worth of half a town,
A war-horse of the best, and near it stood
The two that out of north had follow'd him.
This bare a maiden shield, a casque; that held
The horse, the spear; whereat Sir Gareth loosed
A cloak that dropt from collar-bone to heel,
A cloth of roughest web, and cast it down,
And from it, like a fuel-smother'd fire
That lookt half-dead, brake bright, and flash'd as those
Dull-coated things, that making slide apart
Their dusk wing-cases, all beneath there burns
A jewell'd harness, ere they pass and fly.
So Gareth ere he parted flash'd in arms.
Then as he donn'd the helm, and took the shield
And mounted horse and grasp't a spear, of grain
Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site, and tipt
With trenchant steel, around him slowly prest
The people, while from out of kitchen came
The thralls in throng, and seeing who had work'd
Lustier than any, and whom they could but love,
Mounted in arms, threw up their caps and cried,
"God bless the King, and all his fellowship!"

And on thro' lanes of shouting Gareth rode
Down the slope street, and past without the gate.

So Gareth past with joy; but as the cur
Pluckt from the cur he fights with, ere his cause
Be cool'd by fighting, follows, being named,
His owner, but remembers all, and growls
Remembering, so Sir Kay beside the door
Mutter'd in scorn of Gareth whom he used
To harry and hustle.

"Bound upon a quest
With horse and arms — the King hath past his time —
My scullion knave! Thralls, to your work again,
For an your fire be low ye kindle mine!
Will there be dawn in West and eve in East?
Begone! — my knave! — belike and like enow
Some old head-blow not heeded in his youth
So shook his wits they wander in his prime —
Crazed! How the villain lifted up his voice,
Nor shamed to bawl himself a kitchen-knave!
Tut, he was tame and meek enow with me,
Till peacock'd up with Lancelot's noticing.
Well — I will after my loud knave, and learn
Whether he know me for his master yet.
Out of the smoke he came, and so my lance
Hold, by God's grace, he shall into the mire —
Thence, if the King awaken from his craze,
Into the smoke again."

But Lancelot said:
"Kay, wherefore wilt thou go against the King,
For that did never he whereon ye rail,
But ever meekly served the King in thee?
Abide: take counsel; for this lad is great

And lusty, and knowing both of lance and sword."
"Tut, tell not me," said Kay, "ye are overfine
To mar stout knaves with foolish courtesies:"
Then mounted, on thro' silent faces rode
Down the slope city, and out beyond the gate.

But by the field of tourney lingering yet
Mutter'd the damsel: "Wherefore did the King
Scorn me? for, were Sir Lancelot lackt, at least
He might have yielded to me one of those
Who tilt for lady's love and glory here,
Rather than — O sweet heaven! O fie upon him! —
His kitchen-knave."

To whom Sir Gareth drew —
And there were none but few goodlier than he —
Shining in arms, "Damsel, the quest is mine.
Lead, and I follow." She thereat, as one
That smells a foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt,
And deems it carrion of some woodland thing,
Or shrew, or weasel, nipt her slender nose
With petulant thumb and finger, shrilling, "Hence!
Avoid, thou smellest all of kitchen-grease.
And look who comes behind;" for there was Kay.
"Knowest thou not me? thy master I am Kay.
We lack thee by the hearth."

And Gareth to him,
"Master no more! too well I know thee, ay —
The most ungentle knight in Arthur's hall."
"Have at thee then," said Kay: they shock'd, and Kay
Fell shoulder-slipt, and Gareth cried again,
"Lead, and I follow," and fast away she fled.

But after sod and shingle ceased to fly
Behind her, and the heart of her good horse

Was nigh to burst with violence of the beat,
Perforce she stay'd, and overtaken spoke:

"What doest thou, scullion, in my fellowship?
Deem'st thou that I accept thee aught the more
Or love thee better, that by some device
Full cowardly, or by mere unhappiness,
Thou hast overthrown and slain thy master — thou! —
Dish-washer and broach-turner, loon! — to me
Thou smellest all of kitchen as before."

"Damsel," Sir Gareth answer'd gently, "say
Whate'er ye will, but whatsoe'er ye say,
I leave not till I finish this fair quest,
Or die therefore."

"Ay, wilt thou finish it?
Sweet lord, how like a noble knight he talks!
The listening rogue hath caught the manner of it.
But, knave, anon thou shalt be met with, knave,
And then by such a one that thou for all
The kitchen brewis that was ever supt
Shalt not once dare to look him in the face."

"I shall assay," said Gareth with a smile
That madden'd her, and away she flash'd again
Down the long avenues of a boundless wood,
And Gareth following was again beknaved:

"Sir Kitchen-knave, I have miss'd the only way
Where Arthur's men are set along the wood;
The wood is nigh as full of thieves as leaves:
If both be slain, I am rid of thee; but yet,
Sir Scullion, canst thou use that spit of thine?
Fight, an thou canst: I have miss'd the only way."

So till the dusk that follow'd evensong
Rode on the two, reviler and reviled;
Then after one long slope was mounted, saw,
Bowl-shaped, thro' tops of many thousand pines
A gloomy-gladed hollow slowly sink
To westward — in the deeps whereof a mere,
Round as the red eye of an eagle-owl,
Under the half-dead sunset glared; and shouts
Ascended, and there brake a servingman
Flying from out of the black wood, and crying,
"They have bound my lord to cast him in the mere."
Then Gareth, "Bound am I to right the wrong'd,
But straitlier bound am I to bide with thee."
And when the damsel spake contemptuously,
"Lead, and I follow," Gareth cried again,
"Follow, I lead!" so down among the pines
He plunged; and there, black-shadow'd nigh the mere,
And mid-thigh-deep in bulrushes and reed,
Saw six tall men haling a seventh along,
A stone about his neck to drown him in it.
Three with good blows he quieted, but three
Fled thro' the pines; and Gareth loosed the stone
From off his neck, then in the mere beside
Tumbled it; oilily bubbled up the mere.
Last, Gareth loosed his bonds and on free feet
Set him, a stalwart baron, Arthur's friend.

"Well that ye came, or else these caitiff rogues
Had wreak'd themselves on me; good cause is theirs
To hate me, for my wont hath ever been
To catch my thief, and then like vermin here
Drown him, and with a stone about his neck;
And under this wan water many of them
Lie rotting, but at night let go the stone,
And rise, and flickering in a grimly light

Dance on the mere. Good now, ye have saved a life
Worth somewhat as the cleanser of this wood.
And fain would I reward thee worshipfully.
What guerdon will ye?"

Gareth sharply spake:
"None! for the deed's sake have I done the deed,
In uttermost obedience to the King.
But wilt thou yield this damsel harborage?"

Whereat the baron saying, "I well believe
You be of Arthur's Table," a light laugh
Broke from Lynette: "Ay, truly of a truth,
And in a sort, being Arthur's kitchen-knave!—
But deem not I accept thee aught the more,
Scullion, for running sharply with thy spit
Down on a rout of craven foresters.
A thresher with his flail had scatter'd them.
Nay — for thou smellest of the kitchen still.
But an this lord will yield us harborage,
Well."

So she spake. A league beyond the wood,
All in a full-fair manor and a rich,
His towers, where that day a feast had been
Held in high hall, and many a viand left,
And many a costly cate, received the three.
And there they placed a peacock in his pride
Before the damsel, and the baron set
Gareth beside her, but at once she rose.

"Meseems, that here is much discourtesy,
Setting this knave, Lord Baron, at my side.
Hear me — this morn I stood in Arthur's hall,
And pray'd the King would grant me Lancelot

To fight the brotherhood of Day and Night —
The last a monster unsubduable
Of any save of him for whom I call'd —
Suddenly bawls this frontless kitchen-knave,
'The quest is mine; thy kitchen-knave am I,
And mighty thro' thy meats and drinks am I.'
Then Arthur all at once gone mad replies,
'Go, therefore,' and so gives the quest to him —
Him — here — a villain fitter to stick swine
Than ride abroad redressing women's wrong,
Or sit beside a noble gentlewoman."

Then half-ashamed and part-amazed, the lord
Now look'd at one and now at other, left
The damsel by the peacock in his pride,
And, seating Gareth at another board,
Sat down beside him, ate and then began:

"Friend, whether thou be kitchen-knave, or not,
Or whether it be the maiden's fantasy,
And whether she be mad, or else the King,
Or both or neither, or thyself be mad,
I ask not: but thou strikest a strong stroke,
For strong thou art and goodly therewithal,
And saver of my life; and therefore now,
For here be mighty men to joust with, weigh
Whether thou wilt not with thy damsel back
To crave again Sir Lancelot of the King.
Thy pardon; I but speak for thine avail,
The saver of my life."

And Gareth said,
"Full pardon, but I follow up the quest,
Despite of Day and Night and Death and Hell."

So when, next morn, the lord whose life he saved
Had, some brief space, convey'd them on their way
And left them with God-speed, Sir Gareth spake,
"Lead, and I follow." Haughtily she replied:

"I fly no more: I allow thee for an hour.
Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood. Nay, furthermore, methinks
Some ruth is mine for thee. Back wilt thou, fool?
For hard by here is one will overthrow
And slay thee; then will I to court again,
And shame the King for only yielding me
My champion from the ashes of his hearth."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd courteously:
"Say thou thy say, and I will do my deed.
Allow me for mine hour, and thou wilt find
My fortunes all as fair as hers who lay
Among the ashes and wedded the King's son."

Then to the shore of one of those long loops
Wherethro' the serpent river coil'd, they came.
Rough-thicketed were the banks and steep; the stream
Full, narrow; this a bridge of single arc
Took at a leap; and on the further side
Arose a silk pavilion, gay with gold
In streaks and rays, and all Lent-lily in hue,
Save that the dome was purple, and above,
Crimson, a slender banneret fluttering.
And therebefore the lawless warrior paced
Unarm'd, and calling, "Damsel, is this he,
The champion thou hast brought from Arthur's hall?
For whom we let thee pass." "Nay, nay," she said,
"Sir Morning-Star. The King in utter scorn
Of thee and thy much folly hath sent thee here

His kitchen-knave: and look thou to thyself:
See that he fall not on thee suddenly,
And slay thee unarm'd; he is not knight but knave."

Then at his call, "O daughters of the Dawn,
And servants of the Morning-Star, approach,
Arm me," from out the silken curtain-folds
Bare-footed and bare-headed three fair girls
In gilt and rosy raiment came: their feet
In dewy grasses glisten'd; and the hair
All over glanced with dewdrop or with gem
Like sparkles in the stone Avanturine.
These arm'd him in blue arms, and gave a shield
Blue also, and thereon the morning star.
And Gareth silent gazed upon the knight,
Who stood a moment, ere his horse was brought,
Glorying; and in the stream beneath him shone,
Immingled with heaven's azure waveringly,
The gay pavilion and the naked feet,
His arms, the rosy raiment, and the star.

Then she that watch'd him: "Wherefore stare ye so?
Thou shakest in thy fear: there yet is time:
Flee down the valley before he get to horse.
Who will cry shame? Thou art not knight but knave."

Said Gareth: "Damsel, whether knave or knight,
Far liefer had I fight a score of times
Than hear thee so missay me and revile.
Fair words were best for him who fights for thee;
But truly foul are better, for they send
That strength of anger thro' mine arms, I know
That I shall overthrow him."

And he that bore
The star, when mounted, cried from o'er the bridge:
"A kitchen-knave, and sent in scorn of me!
Such fight not I, but answer scorn with scorn.
For this were shame to do him further wrong
Than set him on his feet, and take his horse
And arms, and so return him to the King.
Come, therefore, leave thy lady lightly, knave.
Avoid: for it beseemeth not a knave
To ride with such a lady."

"Dog, thou liest!
I spring from loftier lineage than thine own."
He spake; and all at fiery speed the two
Shock'd on the central bridge, and either spear
Bent but not brake, and either knight at once,
Hurl'd as a stone from out of a catapult
Beyond his horse's crupper and the bridge,
Fell as if dead; but quickly rose and drew,
And Gareth lash'd so fiercely with his brand
He drave his enemy backward down the bridge,
The damsel crying, "Well-stricken, kitchen-knave!"
Till Gareth's shield was cloven; but one stroke
Laid him that clove it grovelling on the ground.

Then cried the fallen, "Take not my life: I yield."
And Gareth, "So this damsel ask it of me
Good — I accord it easily as a grace."
She reddening, "Insolent scullion! I of thee?
I bound to thee for any favor ask'd!"
"Then shall he die." And Gareth there unlaced
His helmet as to slay him, but she shriek'd,
"Be not so hardy, scullion, as to slay
One nobler than thyself." "Damsel, thy charge
Is an abounding pleasure to me. Knight,

Thy life is thine at her command. Arise
And quickly pass to Arthur's hall, and say
His kitchen-knave hath sent thee. See thou crave
His pardon for thy breaking of his laws.
Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Thy shield is mine — farewell; and, damsel, thou,
Lead, and I follow."

And fast away she fled;
Then when he came upon her, spake: "Methought,
Knave, when I watch'd thee striking on the bridge,
The savor of thy kitchen came upon me
A little faintlier: but the wind hath changed;
I scent it twenty-fold." And then she sang,
"'O morning star' — not that tall felon there
Whom thou, by sorcery or unhappiness
Or some device, hast foully overthrown, —
'O morning star that smilest in the blue,
O star, my morning dream hath proven true,
Smile sweetly, thou! my love hath smiled on me.'

"But thou begone, take counsel, and away,
For hard by here is one that guards a ford —
The second brother in their fool's parable —
Will pay thee all thy wages, and to boot.
Care not for shame: thou art not knight but knave."

To whom Sir Gareth answer'd laughingly:
"Parables? Hear a parable of the knave.
When I was kitchen-knave among the rest,
Fierce was the hearth, and one of my co-mates
Own'd a rough dog, to whom he cast his coat,
'Guard it,' and there was none to meddle with it.
And such a coat art thou, and thee the King
Gave me to guard, and such a dog am I,

To worry, and not to flee — and — knight or knave —
The knave that doth thee service as full knight
Is all as good, meseems, as any knight
Toward thy sister's freeing."

"Ay, Sir Knave!
Ay, knave, because thou strikest as a knight,
Being but knave, I hate thee all the more."

"Fair damsel, you should worship me the more,
That, being but knave, I throw thine enemies."

"Ay, ay," she said "but thou shalt meet thy match."

So when they touch'd the second river-loop,
Huge on a huge red horse, and all in mail
Burnish'd to blinding, shone the Noonday Sun
Beyond a raging shallow. As if the flower
That blows a globe of after arrowlets
Ten-thousand-fold had grown, flash'd the fierce shield,
All sun; and Gareth's eyes had flying blots
Before them when he turn'd from watching him.
He from beyond the roaring shallow roar'd,
"What doest thou, brother, in my marches here?"
And she athwart the shallow shrill'd again,
"Here is a kitchen-knave from Arthur's hall
Hath overthrown thy brother, and hath his arms."
"Ugh!" cried the Sun, and, vizoring up a red
And cipher face of rounded foolishness,
Push'd horse across the foamings of the ford,
Whom Gareth met mid-stream: no room was there
For lance or tourney-skill: four strokes they struck
With sword, and these were mighty; the new knight
Had fear he might be shamed; but as the Sun
Heaved up a ponderous arm to strike the fifth,

The hoof of his horse slipt in the stream, the stream
Descended, and the Sun was wash'd away.

Then Gareth laid his lance athwart the ford;
So drew him home; but he that fought no more,
As being all bone-batter'd on the rock,
Yielded; and Gareth sent him to the King.
"Myself when I return will plead for thee.
Lead, and I follow." Quietly she led.
"Hath not the good wind, damsel, changed again?"
"Nay, not a point; nor art thou victor here.
There lies a ridge of slate across the ford;
His horse thereon stumbled — ay, for I saw it.

"'O sun' — not this strong fool whom thou, Sir Knave,
Hast overthrown thro' mere unhappiness —
'O sun, that wakenest all to bliss or pain,
O moon, that layest all to sleep again,
Shine sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of love-song or of love?
Nay, nay, God wot, so thou wert nobly born,
Thou hast a pleasant presence. Yea, perchance, —

"'O dewy flowers that open to the sun,
O dewy flowers that close when day is done,
Blow sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of flowers, except, belike,
To garnish meats with? hath not our good King
Who lent me thee, the flower of kitchendom,
A foolish love for flowers? what stick ye round
The pasty? wherewithal deck the boar's head?
Flowers? nay, the boar hath rosemaries and bay.

"'O birds that warble to the morning sky,
O birds that warble as the day goes by,
Sing sweetly: twice my love hath smiled on me.'

"What knowest thou of birds, lark, mavis, merle,
Linnet? what dream ye when they utter forth
May-music growing with the growing light,
Their sweet sun-worship? these be for the snare —
So runs thy fancy — these be for the spit,
Larding and basting. See thou have not now
Larded thy last, except thou turn and fly.
There stands the third fool of their allegory."

For there beyond a bridge of treble bow,
All in a rose-red from the west, and all
Naked it seem'd, and glowing in the broad
Deep-dimpled current underneath, the knight
That named himself the Star of Evening stood.

And Gareth, "Wherefore waits the madman there
Naked in open dayshine?" "Nay," she cried,
"Not naked, only wrapt in harden'd skins
That fit him like his own; and so ye cleave
His armor off him, these will turn the blade."

Then the third brother shouted o'er the bridge,
"O brother-star, why shine ye here so low?
Thy ward is higher up: but have ye slain
The damsel's champion?" and the damsel cried:

"No star of thine, but shot from Arthur's heaven
With all disaster unto thine and thee!
For both thy younger brethren have gone down
Before this youth; and so wilt thou, Sir Star;
Art thou not old?"

"Old, damsel, old and hard,
Old, with the might and breath of twenty boys."
Said Gareth, "Old, and over-bold in brag!
But that same strength which threw the Morning Star
Can throw the Evening."

Then that other blew
A hard and deadly note upon the horn.
"Approach and arm me!" With slow steps from out
An old storm-beaten, russet, many-stain'd
Pavilion, forth a grizzled damsel came,
And arm'd him in old arms, and brought a helm
With but a drying evergreen for crest,
And gave a shield whereon the star of even
Half-tarnish'd and half-bright, his emblem, shone.
But when it glitter'd o'er the saddle-bow,
They madly hurl'd together on the bridge;
And Gareth overthrew him, lighted, drew,
There met him drawn, and overthrew him again,
But up like fire he started: and as oft
As Gareth brought him grovelling on his knees,
So many a time he vaulted up again;
Till Gareth panted hard, and his great heart,
Foredooming all his trouble was in vain,
Labor'd within him, for he seem'd as one
That all in later, sadder age begins
To war against ill uses of a life,
But these from all his life arise, and cry,
"Thou hast made us lords, and canst not put us down!"
He half despairs; so Gareth seem'd to strike
Vainly, the damsel clamoring all the while,
"Well done, knave-knight, well stricken, O good knight-knave—
O knave, as noble as any of all the knights—

Shame me not, shame me not. I have prophesied —
Strike, thou art worthy of the Table Round —
His arms are old, he trusts the harden'd skin —
Strike — strike — the wind will never change again."
And Gareth hearing ever stronglier smote,
And hew'd great pieces of his armor off him,
But lash'd in vain against the harden'd skin,
And could not wholly bring him under, more
Than loud Southwesterns, rolling ridge on ridge,
The buoy that rides at sea, and dips and springs
For ever; till at length Sir Gareth's brand
Clash'd his, and brake it utterly to the hilt
"I have thee now;" but forth that other sprang,
And, all unknightlike, writhed his wiry arms
Around him, till he felt, despite his mail,
Strangled, but straining even his uttermost
Cast, and so hurl'd him headlong o'er the bridge
Down to the river, sink or swim, and cried,
"Lead, and I follow."

But the damsel said:
"I lead no longer; ride thou at my side;
Thou art the kingliest of all kitchen-knaves.

"'O trefoil, sparkling on the rainy plain,
O rainbow with three colors after rain,
Shine sweetly: thrice my love hath smiled on me.'

"Sir, — and, good faith, I fain had added — Knight,
But that I heard thee call thyself a knave, —
Shamed am I that I so rebuked, reviled,
Missaid thee; noble I am; and thought the King
Scorn'd me and mine; and now thy pardon, friend,
For thou hast ever answer'd courteously,
And wholly bold thou art, and meek withal

As any of Arthur's best, but, being knave,
Hast mazed my wit: I marvel what thou art."

"Damsel," he said, "you be not all to blame,
Saving that you mistrusted our good King
Would handle scorn, or yield you, asking, one
Not fit to cope your quest. You said your say;
Mine answer was my deed. Good sooth! I hold
He scarce is knight, yea but half-man, nor meet
To fight for gentle damsel, he, who lets
His heart be stirr'd with any foolish heat
At any gentle damsel's waywardness.
Shamed? care not! thy foul sayings fought for me:
And seeing now thy words are fair, methinks
There rides no knight, not Lancelot, his great self,
Hath force to quell me."

Nigh upon that hour
When the lone hern forgets his melancholy,
Lets down his other leg, and stretching dreams
Of goodly supper in the distant pool,
Then turn'd the noble damsel smiling at him,
And told him of a cavern hard at hand,
Where bread and baken meats and good red wine
Of Southland, which the Lady Lyonors
Had sent her coming champion, waited him.

Anon they past a narrow comb wherein
Were slabs of rock with figures, knights on horse
Sculptured, and deckt in slowly-waning hues.
"Sir Knave, my knight, a hermit once was here,
Whose holy hand hath fashion'd on the rock
The war of Time against the soul of man.
And yon four fools have suck'd their allegory
From these damp walls, and taken but the form.

Know ye not these?" and Gareth lookt and read—
In letters like to those the vexillary
Hath left crag-carven o'er the streaming Gelt—
"PHOSPHORUS," then "MERIDIES,"—"HESPERUS"—
"NOX"—"MORS," beneath five figures, armed men,
Slab after slab, their faces forward all,
And running down the Soul, a shape that fled
With broken wings, torn raiment, and loose hair,
For help and shelter to the hermit's cave.
"Follow the faces, and we find it. Look,
Who comes behind?"

For one—delay'd at first
Thro' helping back the dislocated Kay
To Camelot, then by what thereafter chanced,
The damsel's headlong error thro' the wood—
Sir Lancelot, having swum the river-loops—
His blue shield-lions cover'd—softly drew
Behind the twain, and when he saw the star
Gleam, on Sir Gareth's turning to him, cried,
"Stay, felon knight, I avenge me for my friend."
And Gareth crying prick'd against the cry;
But when they closed—in a moment—at one touch
Of that skill'd spear, the wonder of the world—
Went sliding down so easily, and fell,
That when he found the grass within his hands
He laugh'd; the laughter jarr'd upon Lynette:
Harshly she ask'd him, "Shamed and overthrown,
And tumbled back into the kitchen-knave,
Why laugh ye? that ye blew your boast in vain?"
"Nay, noble damsel, but that I, the son
Of old King Lot and good Queen Bellicent,
And victor of the bridges and the ford,
And knight of Arthur, here lie thrown by whom
I know not, all thro' mere unhappiness—

Device and sorcery and unhappiness —
Out, sword; we are thrown!" And Lancelot answer'd:
"Prince,
O Gareth — thro' the mere unhappiness
Of one who came to help thee, not to harm,
Lancelot, and all as glad to find thee whole
As on the day when Arthur knighted him."

Then Gareth: "Thou — Lancelot! — thine the hand
That threw me? An some chance to mar the boast
Thy brethren of thee make — which could not chance —
Had sent thee down before a lesser spear,
Shamed had I been, and sad — O Lancelot — thou!"

Whereat the maiden, petulant: "Lancelot,
Why came ye not, when call'd? and wherefore now
Come ye, not call'd? I gloried in my knave,
Who being still rebuked would answer still
Courteous as any knight — but now, if knight,
The marvel dies, and leaves me fool'd and trick'd,
And only wondering wherefore play'd upon;
And doubtful whether I and mine be scorn'd.
Where should be truth if not in Arthur's hall,
In Arthur's presence? Knight, knave, prince and fool,
I hate thee and forever."

And Lancelot said:
"Blessed be thou, Sir Gareth! knight art thou
To the King's best wish. O damsel, be you wise,
To call him shamed who is but overthrown?
Thrown have I been, nor once, but many a time.
Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last,
And overthrower from being overthrown.
With sword we have not striven; and thy good horse

And thou are weary; yet not less I felt
Thy manhood thro' that wearied lance of thine.
Well hast thou done; for all the stream is freed,
And thou hast wreak'd his justice on his foes,
And when reviled hast answer'd graciously,
And makest merry when overthrown. Prince, knight,
Hail, knight and prince, and of our Table Round!"

And then when turning to Lynette he told
The tale of Gareth, petulantly she said:
"Ay, well—ay, well—for worse than being fool'd
Of others, is to fool one's self. A cave,
Sir Lancelot, is hard by, with meats and drinks
And forage for the horse, and flint for fire.
But all about it flies a honeysuckle.
Seek, till we find." And when they sought and found,
Sir Gareth drank and ate, and all his life
Past into sleep; on whom the maiden gazed:
"Sound sleep be thine! sound cause to sleep hast thou.
Wake lusty! Seem I not as tender to him
As any mother? Ay, but such a one
As all day long hath rated at her child,
And vext his day, but blesses him asleep—
Good lord, how sweetly smells the honeysuckle
In the hush'd night, as if the world were one
Of utter peace, and love, and gentleness!
O Lancelot, Lancelot,"—and she clapt her hands—
"Full merry am I to find my goodly knave
Is knight and noble. See now, sworn have I,
Else yon black felon had not let me pass,
To bring thee back to do the battle with him.
Thus an thou goest, he will fight thee first;
Who doubts thee victor? so will my knight-knave
Miss the full flower of this accomplishment."

Said Lancelot: "Peradventure he you name
May know my shield. Let Gareth, an he will,
Change his for mine, and take my charger, fresh,
Not to be spurr'd, loving the battle as well
As he that rides him." "Lancelot-like," she said,
"Courteous in this, Lord Lancelot, as in all."

And Gareth, wakening, fiercely clutch'd the shield:
"Ramp, ye lance-splintering lions, on whom all spears
Are rotten sticks! ye seem agape to roar!
Yea, ramp and roar at leaving of your lord! —
Care not, good beasts, so well I care for you.
O noble Lancelot, from my hold on these
Streams virtue — fire — thro' one that will not shame
Even the shadow of Lancelot under shield.
Hence: let us go."

Silent the silent field
They traversed. Arthur's Harp tho' summer-wan,
In counter motion to the clouds, allured
The glance of Gareth dreaming on his liege.
A star shot: "Lo," said Gareth, "the foe falls!"
An owl whoopt: "Hark the victor pealing there!"
Suddenly she that rode upon his left
Clung to the shield that Lancelot lent him, crying:
"Yield, yield him this again; 'tis he must fight:
I curse the tongue that all thro' yesterday
Reviled thee, and hath wrought on Lancelot now
To lend thee horse and shield: wonders ye have done;
Miracles ye cannot: here is glory enow
In having flung the three: I see thee maim'd,
Mangled: I swear thou canst not fling the fourth."

"And wherefore, damsel? tell me all ye know.
You cannot scare me; nor rough face, or voice,

Brute bulk of limb, or boundless savagery
Appall me from the quest."

"Nay, prince," she cried,
"God wot, I never look'd upon the face,
Seeing he never rides abroad by day;
But watch'd him have I like a phantom pass
Chilling the night: nor have I heard the voice.
Always he made his mouthpiece of a page
Who came and went, and still reported him
As closing in himself the strength of ten,
And when his anger tare him, massacring
Man, woman, lad, and girl — yea, the soft babe!
Some hold that he hath swallow'd infant flesh,
Monster! O prince, I went for Lancelot first,
The quest is Lancelot's: give him back the shield."

Said Gareth laughing, "An he fight for this,
Belike he wins it as the better man:
Thus — and not else!"

But Lancelot on him urged
All the devisings of their chivalry
When one might meet a mightier than himself;
How best to manage horse, lance, sword, and shield,
And so fill up the gap where force might fail
With skill and fineness. Instant were his words.

Then Gareth: "Here be rules. I know but one —
To dash against mine enemy and to win.
Yet have I watch'd thee victor in the joust,
And seen thy way." "Heaven help thee!" sigh'd
Lynette.

Then for a space, and under cloud that grew
To thunder-gloom palling all stars, they rode

In converse till she made her palfrey halt,
Lifted an arm, and softly whisper'd, "There."
And all the three were silent seeing, pitch'd
Beside the Castle Perilous on flat field,
A huge pavilion like a mountain peak
Sunder the glooming crimson on the marge,
Black, with black banner, and a long black horn
Beside it hanging; which Sir Gareth graspt,
And so, before the two could hinder him,
Sent all his heart and breath thro' all the horn.
Echo'd the walls; a light twinkled; anon
Came lights and lights, and once again he blew;
Whereon were hollow tramplings up and down
And muffled voices heard, and shadows past;
Till high above him, circled with her maids,
The Lady Lyonors at a window stood,
Beautiful among lights, and waving to him
White hands and courtesy; but when the prince
Three times had blown — after long hush — at last —
The huge pavilion slowly yielded up,
Thro' those black foldings, that which housed therein.
High on a night-black horse, in night-black arms,
With white breast-bone, and barren ribs of Death,
And crown'd with fleshless laughter — some ten steps —
In the half-light — thro' the dim dawn — advanced
The monster, and then paused, and spake no word.

But Gareth spake and all indignantly:
"Fool, for thou hast, men say, the strength of ten,
Canst thou not trust the limbs thy God hath given,
But must, to make the terror of thee more,
Trick thyself out in ghastly imageries
Of that which Life hath done with, and the clod,
Less dull than thou, will hide with mantling flowers

As for pity?" But he spake no word;
Which set the horror higher: a maiden swoon'd;
The Lady Lyonors wrung her hands and wept,
As doom'd to be the bride of Night and Death;
Sir Gareth's head prickled beneath his helm;
And even Sir Lancelot thro' his warm blood felt
Ice strike, and all that mark'd him were aghast.

At once Sir Lancelot's charger fiercely neigh'd,
And Death's dark war-horse bounded forward with him.
Then those that did not blink the terror saw
That Death was cast to ground, and slowly rose.
But with one stroke Sir Gareth split the skull.
Half fell to right and half to left and lay.
Then with a stronger buffet he clove the helm
As throughly as the skull; and out from this
Issued the bright face of a blooming boy
Fresh as a flower new-born, and crying, "Knight,
Slay me not: my three brethren bade me do it,
To make a horror all about the house,
And stay the world from Lady Lyonors;
They never dream'd the passes would be past."
Answer'd Sir Gareth graciously to one
Not many a moon his younger, "My fair child,
What madness made thee challenge the chief knight
Of Arthur's hall?" "Fair Sir, they bade me do it.
They hate the King and Lancelot, the King's friend;
They hoped to slay him somewhere on the stream,
They never dream'd the passes could be past."

Then sprang the happier day from underground;
And Lady Lyonors and her house, with dance
And revel and song, made merry over Death,
As being after all their foolish fears

And horrors only proven a blooming boy.
So large mirth lived, and Gareth won the quest.

And he that told the tale in olden times
Says that Sir Gareth wedded Lyonors,
But he that told it later says Lynette.

INTRODUCTION TO "LANCELOT AND ELAINE."

TENNYSON has followed closely the lines of the original romance. He has reproduced the tale with exquisite beauty of thought and touch of fancy. The central figure of the Idyll is Lancelot. On either side stand the contrasted figures of Guinevere and Elaine, both of whom loved him well, but differently, — the one beautiful, of queenly dignity and splendor, but voluptuous and sin-stained, the other a simple maiden, full of sweetness and purity. Lancelot is the peerless knight, gallant and courteous as ever, but with face marred by long conflict between "the great and guilty love he bare the queen" and his loyalty to his lord. Woven in and out of the Idyll is the story of the development to which the love of Lancelot and Guinevere has now attained. In his treatment of the subject, the poet, as Elsdale remarks, trusts to the "effect of alternating light and shadow, to the artistic harmonies and contrasts produced by rapidly changing sequence and grouping of his incidents."[1] We are led rapidly on through shifting scenes, strikingly contrasted, until we come to that characteristic and culminating one between Guinevere and Lancelot in the oriel of the palace. The beautiful soliloquy of Lancelot is a fitting close of the Idyll.

[1] "Studies in the Idylls."

That the reader may more readily understand the Idyll of "Lancelot and Elaine" a brief description of the chief personages is appended.

Lancelot du Lac. Most of those prominent at King Arthur's court had, at least, a historic prototype. It is doubtful if this is true of Lancelot. Some writers are of the opinion that he is a reproduction of a certain Welsh king, Mael, a contemporary of Arthur. There are some points of resemblance between the two, but the opinion seems hardly warranted. The Lancelot of romance is undoubtedly a creation of Map. Whether Map founded his character on a preëxisting Welsh chief is a question. It is more probable that he was a fictitious character, created to embody Map's idea of a purely heroic, chivalric knight of the twelfth century. According to Map, he was the son of King Ban of Brittany, at whose death the infant Lancelot was carried away by Vivien, the Lady of the Lake, who sprang with the child into a deep lake; hence the name Lancelot du Lac. He was afterwards fostered by her, and when he grew to youth was taken to Arthur's court to receive the honor of knighthood. Subsequently by his prowess he became the most renowned knight of the Round Table, and the favorite of Arthur. He it was who acted as Arthur's ambassador to Leodegraunce, to ask the hand of the beautiful Guinevere, when commenced that fatal love which clouded his whole future life.

Guinevere, or, as the bards call her, Gwenhwyvar, was the daughter of Leodegraunce, or Leodegran, king of Cameliard. She became the wife of Arthur, and queen of his court. She is represented by the early bards as "of

a haughty disposition even in her youth, and still more haughty in her womanhood." She is jealous, proud, and quick to anger. Her unlawful love for Lancelot, and his attachment to her, brought dishonor to Arthur's court and destruction to the Order of the Round Table.

Elaine was the daughter of Sir Bernard, Lord of Astolat. She represents a gracious and beautiful type of innocent girlhood, and the story of her unrequited love moves all hearts.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

ELAINE the fair, Elaine the lovable,
Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat,
High in her chamber up a tower to the east
Guarded the sacred shield of Lancelot;
Which first she placed where morning's earliest ray
Might strike it, and awake her with the gleam;
Then, fearing rust or soilure, fashion'd for it
A case of silk, and braided thereupon
All the devices blazon'd on the shield
In their own tinct, and added, of her wit,
A border fantasy of branch and flower,
And yellow-throated nestling in the nest.
Nor rested thus content, but day by day,
Leaving her household and good father, climb'd
That eastern tower, and entering barr'd her door,
Stript off the case, and read the naked shield,
Now guess'd a hidden meaning in his arms,
Now made a pretty history to herself
Of every dint a sword had beaten in it,
And every scratch a lance had made upon it,
Conjecturing when and where: this cut is fresh;
That ten years back; this dealt him at Caerlyle;
That at Caerleon; this at Camelot:
And ah, God's mercy, what a stroke was there!
And here a thrust that might have kill'd, but God
Broke the strong lance, and roll'd his enemy down,
And saved him: so she lived in fantasy.

How came the lily maid by that good shield
Of Lancelot, she that knew not even his name?
He left it with her, when he rode to tilt
For the great diamond in the diamond jousts,
Which Arthur had ordain'd, and by that name
Had named them, since a diamond was the prize.

For Arthur, long before they crown'd him king,
Roving the trackless realms of Lyonnesse,
Had found a glen, gray boulder and black tarn.
A horror lived about the tarn, and clave
Like its own mists to all the mountain side:
For here two brothers, one a king, had met
And fought together; but their names were lost;
And each had slain his brother at a blow;
And down they fell and made the glen abhorr'd:
And there they lay till all their bones were bleach'd,
And lichen'd into color with the crags:
And he that once was king had on a crown
Of diamonds, one in front and four aside.
And Arthur came, and laboring up the pass,
All in a misty moonshine, unawares
Had trodden that crown'd skeleton, and the skull
Brake from the nape, and from the skull the crown
Roll'd into light, and turning on its rims
Fled like a glittering rivulet to the tarn:
And down the shingly scaur he plunged, and caught,
And set it on his head, and in his heart
Heard murmurs, "Lo, thou likewise shalt be king."

Thereafter, when a king, he had the gems
Pluck'd from the crown, and show'd them to his knights,
Saying: "These jewels, whereupon I chanced
Divinely, are the kingdom's, not the King's—
For public use: henceforward let there be,

Once every year, a joust for one of these:
For so by nine years' proof we needs must learn
Which is our mightiest, and ourselves shall grow
In use of arms and manhood, till we drive
The heathen, who, some say, shall rule the land
Hereafter, which God hinder!" Thus he spoke:
And eight years past, eight jousts had been, and still
Had Lancelot won the diamond of the year,
With purpose to present them to the Queen
When all were won; but, meaning all at once
To snare her royal fancy with a boon
Worth half her realm, had never spoken word.

Now for the central diamond and the last
And largest, Arthur, holding then his court
Hard on the river nigh the place which now
Is this world's hugest, let proclaim a joust
At Camelot, and when the time drew nigh
Spake — for she had been sick — to Guinevere:
"Are you so sick, my Queen, you cannot move
To these fair jousts?" "Yea, lord," she said, "ye know it."
"Then will ye miss," he answer'd, "the great deeds
Of Lancelot, and his prowess in the lists,
A sight ye love to look on." And the Queen
Lifted her eyes, and they dwelt languidly
On Lancelot, where he stood beside the King.
He, thinking that he read her meaning there,
"Stay with me, I am sick; my love is more
Than many diamonds," yielded; and a heart
Love-loyal to the least wish of the Queen —
However much he yearn'd to make complete
The tale of diamonds for his destined boon —
Urged him to speak against the truth, and say,
"Sir King, mine ancient wound is hardly whole,
And lets me from the saddle;" and the King

Glanced first at him, then her, and went his way.
No sooner gone than suddenly she began:

"To blame, my lord Sir Lancelot, much to blame!
Why go ye not to these fair jousts? the knights
Are half of them our enemies, and the crowd
Will murmur, 'Lo the shameless ones, who take
Their pastime now the trustful King is gone!'"
Then Lancelot, vext at having lied in vain:
"Are ye so wise? ye were not once so wise,
My Queen, that summer when ye loved me first.
Then of the crowd ye took no more account
Than of the myriad cricket of the mead,
When its own voice clings to each blade of grass,
And every voice is nothing. As to knights,
Them surely can I silence with all ease.
But now my loyal worship is allow'd
Of all men: many a bard, without offence,
Has link'd our names together in his lay,
Lancelot, the flower of bravery, Guinevere,
The pearl of beauty; and our knights at feast
Have pledged us in this union, while the King
Would listen smiling. How then? is there more?
Has Arthur spoken aught? or would yourself,
Now weary of my service and devoir,
Henceforth be truer to your faultless lord?"

She broke into a little scornful laugh:
"Arthur, my lord, Arthur, the faultless King,
That passionate perfection, my good lord—
But who can gaze upon the sun in heaven?
He never spake word of reproach to me,
He never had a glimpse of mine untruth,
He cares not for me: only here to-day
There gleamed a vague suspicion in his eyes:

Some meddling rogue has tamper'd with him — else
Rapt in this fancy of his Table Round,
And swearing men to vows impossible,
To make them like himself; but, friend, to me
He is all fault who hath no fault at all:
For who loves me must have a touch of earth;
The low sun makes the color: I am yours,
Not Arthur's, as ye know, save by the bond.
And therefore hear my words: go to the jousts:
The tiny-trumpeting gnat can break our dream
When sweetest; and the vermin voices here
May buzz so loud — we scorn them, but they sting."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"And with what face, after my pretext made,
Shall I appear, O Queen, at Camelot, I
Before a king who honors his own word
As if it were his God's?"

"Yea," said the Queen,
"A moral child without the craft to rule,
Else had he not lost me: but listen to me,
If I must find you wit: we hear it said
That men go down before your spear at a touch,
But knowing you are Lancelot; your great name,
This conquers: hide it therefore; go unknown:
Win! by this kiss you will: and our true King
Will then allow your pretext, O my knight,
As all for glory: for to speak him true,
Ye know right well, how meek soe'er he seem,
No keener hunter after glory breathes.
He loves it in his knights more than himself;
They prove to him his work: win and return."

Then got Sir Lancelot suddenly to horse,
Wroth at himself. Not willing to be known,
He left the barren-beaten thoroughfare,
Chose the green path that show'd the rarer foot,
And there among the solitary downs,
Full often lost in fancy, lost his way;
Till as he traced a faintly-shadow'd track,
That all in loops and links among the dales
Ran to the Castle of Astolat, he saw
Fired from the west, far on a hill, the towers.
Thither he made, and blew the gateway horn.
Then came an old, dumb, myriad-wrinkled man,
Who let him into lodging and disarm'd.
And Lancelot marvell'd at the wordless man;
And issuing found the Lord of Astolat
With two strong sons, Sir Torre and Sir Lavaine,
Moving to meet him in the castle court;
And close behind them stept the lily maid
Elaine, his daughter: mother of the house
There was not. Some light jest among them rose
With laughter dying down as the great knight
Approach'd them; then the Lord of Astolat:
"Whence comest thou, my guest, and by what name
Livest between the lips? for by thy state
And presence I might guess thee chief of those,
After the King, who eat in Arthur's halls.
Him have I seen: the rest, his Table Round,
Known as they are, to me they are unknown."

Then answer'd Lancelot, the chief of knights:
"Known am I, and of Arthur's hall, and known,
What I by mere mischance have brought, my shield.
But since I go to joust as one unknown
At Camelot for the diamond, ask me not;
Hereafter ye shall know me — and the shield —

I pray you lend me one, if such you have,
Blank, or at least with some device not mine."

Then said the Lord of Astolat: "Here is Torre's:
Hurt in his first tilt was my son, Sir Torre;
And so, God wot, his shield is blank enough.
His ye can have." Then added plain Sir Torre,
"Yea, since I cannot use it, ye may have it."
Here laugh'd the father saying: "Fie, Sir Churl,
Is that an answer for a noble knight?
Allow him! but Lavaine, my younger here,
He is so full of lustihood, he will ride,
Joust for it, and win, and bring it in an hour,
And set it in this damsel's golden hair,
To make her twice as wilful as before."

"Nay, father, nay, good father, shame me not
Before this noble knight," said young Lavaine,
"For nothing. Surely I but play'd on Torre:
He seem'd so sullen, vext he could not go:
A jest, no more! for, knight, the maiden dreamt
That some one put this diamond in her hand,
And that it was too slippery to be held,
And slipt and fell into some pool or stream,
The castle-well, belike; and then I said
That *if* I went and *if* I fought and won it —
But all was jest and joke among ourselves —
Then must she keep it safelier. All was jest.
But, father, give me leave, and if he will,
To ride to Camelot with this noble knight:
Win shall I not, but do my best to win;
Young as I am, yet would I do my best."

"So ye will grace me," answer'd Lancelot,
Smiling a moment, "with your fellowship

O'er these waste downs whereon I lost myself,
Then were I glad of you as guide and friend:
And you shall win this diamond, — as I hear,
It is a fair large diamond, — if ye may,
And yield it to this maiden, if ye will."
"A fair large diamond," added plain Sir Torre,
"Such be for queens, and not for simple maids."
Then she, who held her eyes upon the ground,
Elaine, and heard her name so tost about,
Flush'd slightly at the slight disparagement
Before the stranger knight, who, looking at her,
Full courtly, yet not falsely, thus return'd:
"If what is fair be but for what is fair,
And only queens are to be counted so,
Rash were my judgment then, who deem this maid
Might wear as fair a jewel as is on earth,
Not violating the bond of like to like."

He spoke and ceased: the lily maid Elaine,
Won by the mellow voice before she look'd,
Lifted her eyes and read his lineaments.
The great and guilty love he bare the Queen,
In battle with the love he bare his lord,
Had marr'd his face, and mark'd it ere his time.
Another sinning on such heights with one,
The flower of all the west and all the world,
Had been the sleeker for it; but in him
His mood was often like a fiend, and rose
And drove him into wastes and solitudes
For agony, who was yet a living soul.
Marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man
That ever among ladies ate in hall,
And noblest, when she lifted up her eyes.
However marr'd, of more than twice her years,
Seam'd with an ancient sword-cut on the cheek,

And bruised and bronzed, she lifted up her eyes
And loved him, with that love which was her doom.

Then the great knight, the darling of the court,
Loved of the loveliest, into that rude hall
Stept with all grace, and not with half disdain
Hid under grace, as in a smaller time,
But kindly man moving among his kind:
Whom they with meats and vintage of their best
And talk and minstrel melody entertain'd.
And much they ask'd of court and Table Round,
And ever well and readily answer'd he;
But Lancelot, when they glanced at Guinevere,
Suddenly speaking of the wordless man,
Heard from the baron that, ten years before,
The heathen caught and reft him of his tongue.
"He learnt and warn'd me of their fierce design
Against my house, and him they caught and maim'd;
But I, my sons, and little daughter fled
From bonds or death, and dwelt among the woods
By the great river in a boatman's hut.
Dull days were those, till our good Arthur broke
The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill."

"O there, great lord, doubtless," Lavaine said, rapt
By all the sweet and sudden passion of youth
Toward greatness in its elder, "you have fought.
O, tell us — for we live apart — you know
Of Arthur's glorious wars." And Lancelot spoke
And answer'd him at full, as having been
With Arthur in the fight which all day long
Rang by the white mouth of the violent Glem;
And in the four loud battles by the shore
Of Duglas; that on Bassa; then the war
That thunder'd in and out the gloomy skirts

Of Celidon the forest; and again
By Castle Gurnion, where the glorious King
Had on his cuirass worn our Lady's Head,
Carved of one emerald centred in a sun
Of silver rays, that lighten'd as he breathed;
And at Caerleon had he helped his lord,
When the strong neighings of the wild White Horse
Set every gilded parapet shuddering;
And up in Agned-Cathregonion too,
And down the waste sand-shores of Trath Treroit,
Where many a heathen fell; "and on the mount
Of Badon I myself beheld the King
Charge at the head of all his Table Round,
And all his legions crying Christ and him,
And break them; and I saw him, after, stand
High on a heap of slain, from spur to plume
Red as the rising sun with heathen blood,
And seeing me, with a great voice he cried,
'They are broken, they are broken!' for the King,
However mild he seems at home, nor cares
For triumph in our mimic wars, the jousts —
For if his own knight casts him down, he laughs,
Saying his knights are better men than he —
Yet in this heathen war the fire of God
Fills him: I never saw his like; there lives
No greater leader."

While he utter'd this,
Low to her own heart said the lily maid,
"Save your great self, fair lord;" and when he fell
From talk of war to traits of pleasantry —
Being mirthful he, but in a stately kind —
She still took note that when the living smile
Died from his lips, across him came a cloud
Of melancholy severe, from which again,

Whenever in her hovering to and fro
The lily maid had striven to make him cheer,
There brake a sudden-beaming tenderness
Of manners and of nature: and she thought
That all was nature, all, perchance, for her.
And all night long his face before her lived,
As when a painter, poring on a face,
Divinely thro' all hindrance finds the man
Behind it, and so paints him that his face,
The shape and color of a mind and life,
Lives for his children, ever at its best
And fullest; so the face before her lived,
Dark-splendid, speaking in the silence, full
Of noble things, and held her from her sleep,
Till rathe she rose, half-cheated in the thought
She needs must bid farewell to sweet Lavaine.
First as in fear, step after step, she stole
Down the long tower-stairs, hesitating:
Anon, she heard Sir Lancelot cry in the court,
"This shield, my friend, where is it?" and Lavaine
Past inward, as she came from out the tower.
There to his proud horse Lancelot turn'd, and smooth'd
The glossy shoulder, humming to himself.
Half-envious of the flattering hand, she drew
Nearer and stood. He look'd, and, more amazed
Than if seven men had set upon him, saw
The maiden standing in the dewy light.
He had not dream'd she was so beautiful.
Then came on him a sort of sacred fear,
For silent, tho' he greeted her, she stood
Rapt on his face as if it were a god's.
Suddenly flash'd on her a wild desire
That he should wear her favor at the tilt.
She braved a riotous heart in asking for it.
"Fair lord, whose name I know not — noble it is,

I well believe, the noblest — will you wear
My favor at this tourney?" "Nay," said he,
"Fair lady, since I never yet have worn
Favor of any lady in the lists.
Such is my wont, as those who know me know."
"Yea, so," she answer'd; "then in wearing mine
Needs must be lesser likelihood, noble lord,
That those who know should know you." And he turn'd
Her counsel up and down within his mind,
And found it true, and answer'd: "True, my child.
Well, I will wear it: fetch it out to me:
What is it?" and she told him, "A red sleeve
Broider'd with pearls," and brought it: then he bound
Her token on his helmet, with a smile
Saying, "I never yet have done so much
For any maiden living," and the blood
Sprang to her face and fill'd her with delight;
But left her all the paler when Lavaine
Returning brought the yet-unblazon'd shield,
His brother's; which he gave to Lancelot,
Who parted with his own to fair Elaine:
"Do me this grace, my child, to have my shield
In keeping till I come." "A grace to me,"
She answer'd, "twice to-day. I am your squire!"
Whereat Lavaine said laughing: "Lily maid,
For fear our people call you lily maid
In earnest, let me bring your color back;
Once, twice, and thrice: now get you hence to bed:"
So kiss'd her, and Sir Lancelot his own hand,
And thus they moved away: she staid a minute,
Then made a sudden step to the gate, and there —
Her bright hair blown about the serious face
Yet rosy-kindled with her brother's kiss —
Paused by the gateway, standing near the shield
In silence, while she watch'd their arms far-off

Sparkle, until they dipt below the downs.
Then to her tower she climb'd, and took the shield,
There kept it, and so lived in fantasy.

Meanwhile the new companions past away
Far o'er the long backs of the bushless downs,
To where Sir Lancelot knew there lived a knight
Not far from Camelot, now for forty years
A hermit, who had pray'd, labor'd and pray'd,
And ever laboring had scoop'd himself
In the white rock a chapel and a hall
On massive columns, like a shore-cliff cave,
And cells and chambers: all were fair and dry;
The green light from the meadows underneath
Struck up and lived along the milky roofs;
And in the meadows tremulous aspen-trees
And poplars made a noise of falling showers.
And thither wending there that night they bode.

But when the next day broke from underground,
And shot red fire and shadows thro' the cave,
They rose, heard mass, broke fast, and rode away.
Then Lancelot saying, "Hear, but hold my name
Hidden, you ride with Lancelot of the Lake,"
Abash'd Lavaine, whose instant reverence,
Dearer to true young hearts than their own praise,
But left him leave to stammer, "Is it indeed?"
And after muttering, "The great Lancelot,"
At last he got his breath and answer'd: "One,
One have I seen — that other, our liege lord,
The dread Pendragon, Britain's King of kings,
Of whom the people talk mysteriously,
He will be there — then were I stricken blind
That minute, I might say that I had seen."

So spake Lavaine, and when they reach'd the lists
By Camelot in the meadow, let his eyes
Run thro' the peopled gallery which half round
Lay like a rainbow fallen upon the grass,
Until they found the clear-faced King, who sat
Robed in red samite, easily to be known,
Since to his crown the golden dragon clung.
And down his robe the dragon writhed in gold,
And from the carven-work behind him crept
Two dragons gilded, sloping down to make
Arms for his chair, while all the rest of them
Thro' knots and loops and folds innumerable
Fled ever thro' the woodwork, till they found
The new design wherein they lost themselves,
Yet with all ease, so tender was the work:
And, in the costly canopy o'er him set,
Blazed the last diamond of the nameless king.

Then Lancelot answer'd young Lavaine and said:
"Me you call great: mine is the firmer seat,
The truer lance: but there is many a youth
Now crescent, who will come to all I am
And overcome it; and in me there dwells
No greatness, save it be some far-off touch
Of greatness to know well I am not great:
There is the man." And Lavaine gaped upon him
As on a thing miraculous, and anon
The trumpets blew; and then did either side,
They that assail'd, and they that held the lists,
Set lance in rest, strike spur, suddenly move,
Meet in the midst, and there so furiously
Shock that a man far-off might well perceive,
If any man that day were left afield,
The hard earth shake, and a low thunder of arms.
And Lancelot bode a little, till he saw

Which were the weaker; then he hurl'd into it
Against the stronger: little need to speak
Of Lancelot in his glory! King, duke, earl,
Count, baron — whom he smote, he overthrew.

But in the field were Lancelot's kith and kin,
Ranged with the Table Round that held the lists,
Strong men, and wrathful that a stranger knight
Should do and almost overdo the deeds
Of Lancelot; and one said to the other, "Lo!
What is he? I do not mean the force alone —
The grace and versatility of the man!
Is it not Lancelot?" "When has Lancelot worn
Favor of any lady in the lists?
Not such his wont, as we that know him know."
"How then? who then?" a fury seized them all,
A fiery family passion for the name
Of Lancelot, and a glory one with theirs.
They couch'd their spears and prick'd their steeds, and thus,
Their plumes driven backward by the wind they made
In moving, all together down upon him
Bare, as a wild wave in the wide North Sea,
Green-glimmering toward the summit, bears, with all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies,
Down on a bark, and overbears the bark
And him that helms it; so they overbore
Sir Lancelot and his charger, and a spear
Down-glancing lamed the charger, and a spear
Prick'd sharply his own cuirass, and the head
Pierced thro' his side, and there snapt and remain'd.

Then Sir Lavaine did well and worshipfully:
He bore a knight of old repute to the earth,
And brought his horse to Lancelot where he lay.

He up the side, sweating with agony, got,
But thought to do while he might yet endure,
And being lustily holpen by the rest,
His party, — tho' it seem'd half-miracle
To those he fought with, — drave his kith and kin,
And all the Table Round that held the lists,
Back to the barrier; then the trumpets blew
Proclaiming his the prize who wore the sleeve
Of scarlet and the pearls; and all the knights,
His party, cried, "Advance and take thy prize,
The diamond;" but he answer'd: "Diamond me
No diamonds! for God's love, a little air!
Prize me no prizes, for my prize is death!
Hence will I, and I charge you, follow me not."

He spoke, and vanish'd suddenly from the field
With young Lavaine into the poplar grove.
There from his charger down he slid, and sat,
Gasping to Sir Lavaine, "Draw the lance-head."
"Ah, my sweet lord Sir Lancelot," said Lavaine,
"I dread me, if I draw it, you will die."
But he, "I die already with it: draw —
Draw," — and Lavaine drew, and Sir Lancelot gave
A marvellous great shriek and ghastly groan,
And half his blood burst forth, and down he sank
For the pure pain, and wholly swoon'd away.
Then came the hermit out and bare him in,
There stanch'd his wound; and there, in daily doubt
Whether to live or die, for many a week
Hid from the wild world's rumor by the grove
Of poplars with their noise of falling showers,
And ever-tremulous aspen-trees, he lay.

But on that day when Lancelot fled the lists,
His party, knights of utmost North and West,

Lords of waste marshes, kings of desolate isles,
Came round their great Pendragon, saying to him,
"Lo, Sire, our knight, thro' whom we won the day,
Hath gone sore wounded, and hath left his prize
Untaken, crying that his prize is death."
"Heaven hinder," said the King, "that such an one,
So great a knight as we have seen to-day —
He seem'd to me another Lancelot —
Yea, twenty times I thought him Lancelot —
He must not pass uncared for. Wherefore rise,
O Gawain, and ride forth and find the knight.
Wounded and wearied, needs must he be near.
I charge you that you get at once to horse.
And, knights and kings, there breathes not one of you
Will deem this prize of ours is rashly given:
His prowess was too wondrous. We will do him
No customary honor: since the knight
Came not to us, of us to claim the prize,
Ourselves will send it after. Rise and take
This diamond, and deliver it, and return,
And bring us where he is, and how he fares,
And cease not from your quest until ye find."

So saying, from the carven flower above,
To which it made a restless heart, he took
And gave the diamond: then from where he sat
At Arthur's right, with smiling face arose,
With smiling face and frowning heart, a prince
In the mid might and flourish of his May,
Gawain, surnamed the Courteous, fair and strong,
And after Lancelot, Tristram, and Geraint,
And Gareth, a good knight, but therewithal
Sir Modred's brother, and the child of Lot,
Nor often loyal to his word, and now
Wroth that the King's command to sally forth

In quest of whom he knew not, made him leave
The banquet and concourse of knights and kings.

So all in wrath he got to horse and went;
While Arthur to the banquet, dark in mood,
Past, thinking, "Is it Lancelot who hath come
Despite the wound he spake of, all for gain
Of glory, and hath added wound to wound,
And ridden away to die?" So fear'd the King,
And, after two days' tarriance there, return'd.
Then when he saw the Queen, embracing ask'd,
"Love, are you yet so sick?" "Nay, lord," she said.
"And where is Lancelot?" Then the Queen amazed,
"Was he not with you? won he not your prize?"
"Nay, but one like him." "Why, that like was he."
And when the King demanded how she knew,
Said: "Lord, no sooner had ye parted from us
Than Lancelot told me of a common talk
That men went down before his spear at a touch,
But knowing he was Lancelot; his great name
Conquer'd; and therefore would he hide his name
From all men, even the King, and to this end
Had made the pretext of a hindering wound,
That he might joust unknown of all, and learn
If his old prowess were in aught decay'd;
And added, 'Our true Arthur, when he learns,
Will well allow my pretext, as for gain
Of purer glory.'"

Then replied the King:
"Far lovelier in our Lancelot had it been,
In lieu of idly dallying with the truth,
To have trusted me as he hath trusted thee.
Surely his King and most familiar friend
Might well have kept his secret. True, indeed,

Albeit I know my knights fantastical,
So fine a fear in our large Lancelot
Must needs have moved my laughter: now remains
But little cause for laughter: his own kin —
Ill news, my Queen, for all who love him, this! —
His kith and kin, not knowing, set upon him;
So that he went sore wounded from the field.
Yet good news too; for goodly hopes are mine
That Lancelot is no more a lonely heart.
He wore, against his wont, upon his helm
A sleeve of scarlet, broider'd with great pearls,
Some gentle maiden's gift."

"Yea, lord," she said,
"Thy hopes are mine," and saying that, she choked,
And sharply turn'd about to hide her face,
Past to her chamber, and there flung herself
Down on the great King's couch, and writhed upon it,
And clench'd her fingers till they bit the palm,
And shriek'd out "Traitor!" to the unhearing wall,
Then flash'd into wild tears, and rose again,
And moved about her palace, proud and pale.

Gawain the while thro' all the region round
Rode with his diamond, wearied of the quest,
Touch'd at all points except the poplar grove,
And came at last, tho' late, to Astolat;
Whom glittering in enamell'd arms the maid
Glanced at, and cried, "What news from Camelot, lord?
What of the knight with the red sleeve?" "He won."
"I knew it," she said. "But parted from the jousts
Hurt in the side;" whereat she caught her breath;
Thro' her own side she felt the sharp lance go;
Thereon she smote her hand; wellnigh she swoon'd:
And, while he gazed wonderingly at her, came

The Lord of Astolat out, to whom the prince
Reported who he was, and on what quest
Sent, that he bore the prize and could not find
The victor, but had ridden a random round
To seek him, and had wearied of the search.
To whom the Lord of Astolat: "Bide with us,
And ride no more at random, noble prince!
Here was the knight, and here he left a shield;
This will he send or come for: furthermore
Our son is with him; we shall hear anon,
Needs must we hear." To this the courteous prince
Accorded with his wonted courtesy,
Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it,
And staid; and cast his eyes on fair Elaine;
Where could be found face daintier? then her shape
From forehead down to foot, perfect — again
From foot to forehead exquisitely turn'd:
"Well — if I bide, lo! this wild flower for me!"
And oft they met among the garden yews,
And there he set himself to play upon her
With sallying wit, free flashes from a height
Above her, graces of the court, and songs,
Sighs, and low smiles, and golden eloquence,
And amorous adulation, till the maid
Rebell'd against it, saying to him: "Prince,
O loyal nephew of our noble King,
Why ask you not to see the shield he left,
Whence you might learn his name? Why slight your King,
And lose the quest he sent you on, and prove
No surer than our falcon yesterday,
Who lost the hern we slipt her at, and went
To all the winds?" "Nay, by mine head," said he,
"I lose it, as we lose the lark in heaven,
O damsel, in the light of your blue eyes;
But an ye will it let me see the shield."

And when the shield was brought, and Gawain saw
Sir Lancelot's azure lions, crown'd with gold,
Ramp in the field, he smote his thigh, and mock'd:
"Right was the King! our Lancelot! that true man!"
"And right was I," she answer'd merrily, "I,
Who dream'd my knight the greatest knight of all."
"And if *I* dream'd," said Gawain, "that you love
This greatest knight, your pardon! lo, ye know it!
Speak, therefore: shall I waste myself in vain?"
Full simple was her answer: "What know I?
My brethren have been all my fellowship;
And I, when often they have talk'd of love,
Wish'd it had been my mother, for they talk'd,
Meseem'd, of what they knew not; so myself—
I know not if I know what true love is,
But if I know, then, if I love not him,
I know there is none other I can love."
"Yea, by God's death," said he, "ye love him well,
But would not, knew ye what all others know,
And whom he loves." "So be it," cried Elaine,
And lifted her fair face and moved away:
But he pursued her, calling, "Stay a little!
One golden minute's grace! he wore your sleeve:
Would he break faith with one I may not name?
Must our true man change like a leaf at last?
Nay—like enow: why then, far be it from me
To cross our mighty Lancelot in his loves!
And, damsel, for I deem you know full well
Where your great knight is hidden, let me leave
My quest with you; the diamond also: here!
For if you love, it will be sweet to give it;
And if he love, it will be sweet to have it
From your own hand; and whether he love or not,
A diamond is a diamond. Fare you well
A thousand times!—a thousand times farewell!

Yet, if he love, and his love hold, we two
May meet at court hereafter: there, I think,
So ye will learn the courtesies of the court,
We two shall know each other."

Then he gave,
And slightly kiss'd the hand to which he gave,
The diamond, and all wearied of the quest
Leapt on his horse, and carolling as he went
A true-love ballad, lightly rode away.

Thence to the court he past; there told the King
What the King knew, "Sir Lancelot is the knight."
And added, "Sire, my liege, so much I learnt;
But fail'd to find him, tho' I rode all round
The region: but I lighted on the maid
Whose sleeve he wore; she loves him; and to her,
Deeming our courtesy is the truest law,
I gave the diamond: she will render it;
For by mine head she knows his hiding-place."

The seldom-frowning King frown'd, and replied:
"Too courteous truly! ye shall go no more
On quest of mine, seeing that ye forget
Obedience is the courtesy due to kings."

He spake and parted. Wroth, but all in awe,
For twenty strokes of the blood, without a word,
Linger'd that other, staring after him;
Then shook his hair, strode off, and buzz'd abroad
About the maid of Astolat, and her love.
All ears were prick'd at once, all tongues were loosed:
"The maid of Astolat loves Sir Lancelot,
Sir Lancelot loves the maid of Astolat."
Some read the King's face, some the Queen's, and all

Had marvel what the maid might be, but most
Predoom'd her as unworthy. One old dame
Came suddenly on the Queen with the sharp news
She, that had heard the noise of it before,
But sorrowing Lancelot should have stoop'd so low,
Marr'd her friend's aim with pale tranquillity.
So ran the tale like fire about the court,
Fire in dry stubble a nine-days' wonder flared:
Till even the knights at banquet twice or thrice
Forgot to drink to Lancelot and the Queen,
And pledging Lancelot and the lily maid
Smiled at each other, while the Queen, who sat
With lips severely placid, felt the knot
Climb in her throat, and with her feet unseen
Crush'd the wild passion out against the floor
Beneath the banquet, where the meats became
As wormwood and she hated all who pledged.

But far away the maid in Astolat,
Her guiltless rival, she that ever kept
The one-day-seen Sir Lancelot in her heart,
Crept to her father, while he mused alone,
Sat on his knee, stroked his gray face and said:
"Father, you call me wilful, and the fault
Is yours who let me have my will, and now,
Sweet father, will you let me lose my wits?"
"Nay," said he, "surely." "Wherefore, let me hence,"
She answer'd, "and find out our dear Lavaine."
"Ye will not lose your wits for dear Lavaine:
Bide," answer'd he: "we needs must hear anon
Of him, and of that other." "Ay," she said,
"And of that other, for I needs must hence
And find that other, whereso'er he be,
And with mine own hand give his diamond to him,
Lest I be found as faithless in the quest

As yon proud prince who left the quest to me.
Sweet father, I behold him in my dreams
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Death-pale, for the lack of gentle maiden's aid.
The gentler-born the maiden, the more bound,
My father, to be sweet and serviceable
To noble knights in sickness, as ye know,
When these have worn their tokens: let me hence,
I pray you." Then her father nodding said:
"Ay, ay, the diamond: wit ye well, my child,
Right fain were I to learn this knight were whole,
Being our greatest: yea, and you must give it—
And sure I think this fruit is hung too high
For any mouth to gape for save a queen's—
Nay, I mean nothing: so then, get you gone,
Being so very wilful you must go."

Lightly, her suit allow'd, she slipt away,
And while she made her ready for her ride
Her father's latest word humm'd in her ear,
"Being so very wilful you must go,"
And changed itself and echo'd in her heart,
"Being so very wilful you must die."
But she was happy enough and shook it off,
As we shake off the bee that buzzes at us;
And in her heart she answer'd it and said,
"What matter, so I help him back to life?"
Then far away with good Sir Torre for guide.
Rode o'er the long backs of the bushless downs
To Camelot, and before the city-gates
Came on her brother with a happy face,
Making a roan horse caper and curvet
For pleasure all about a field of flowers;
Whom when she saw, "Lavaine," she cried, "Lavaine,
How fares my lord Sir Lancelot?" He amazed,

"Torre and Elaine! why here? Sir Lancelot!
How know ye my lord's name is Lancelot?"
But when the maid had told him all her tale,
Then turn'd Sir Torre, and being in his moods
Left them, and under the strange-statued gate,
Where Arthur's wars were render'd mystically,
Past up the still rich city to his kin,
His own far blood, which dwelt at Camelot;
And her, Lavaine across the poplar grove
Led to the caves: there first she saw the casque
Of Lancelot on the wall: her scarlet sleeve,
Tho' carved and cut, and half the pearls away,
Stream'd from it still; and in her heart she laughed,
Because he had not loosed it from his helm,
But meant once more perchance to tourney in it.
And when they gain'd the cell wherein he slept,
His battle-writhen arms and mighty hands
Lay naked on the wolf-skin, and a dream
Of dragging down his enemy made them move.
Then she that saw him lying unsleek, unshorn,
Gaunt as it were the skeleton of himself,
Utter'd a little tender dolorous cry.
The sound not wonted in a place so still
Woke the sick knight, and while he roll'd his eyes
Yet blank from sleep, she started to him, saying,
"Your prize, the diamond sent you by the King."
His eyes glisten'd: she fancied, "Is it for me?"
And when the maid had told him all the tale
Of king and prince, the diamond sent, the quest
Assign'd to her not worthy of it, she knelt
Full lowly by the corners of his bed,
And laid the diamond in his open hand.
Her face was near, and as we kiss the child
That does the task assign'd, he kiss'd her face.
At once she slipt like water to the floor.

"Alas," he said, "your ride hath wearied you.
Rest must you have." "No rest for me," she said;
"Nay, for near you, fair lord, I am at rest."
What might she mean by that? his large black eyes,
Yet larger thro' his leanness, dwelt upon her,
Till all her heart's sad secret blazed itself
In the heart's colors on her simple face;
And Lancelot look'd and was perplext in mind,
And being weak in body said no more,
But did not love the color; woman's love,
Save one, he not regarded, and so turn'd
Sighing, and feign'd a sleep until he slept.

Then rose Elaine and glided thro' the fields,
And past beneath the weirdly-sculptured gates
Far up the dim rich city to her kin;
There bode the night: but woke with dawn, and past
Down thro' the dim rich city to the fields,
Thence to the cave. So day by day she past
In either twilight ghost-like to and fro
Gliding, and every day she tended him,
And likewise many a night; and Lancelot
Would, tho' he call'd his wound a little hurt
Whereof he should be quickly whole, at times
Brain-feverous in his heat and agony, seem
Uncourteous, even he: but the meek maid
Sweetly forbore him ever, being to him
Meeker than any child to a rough nurse,
Milder than any mother to a sick child,
And never woman yet, since man's first fall,
Did kindlier unto man, but her deep love
Upbore her; till the hermit, skill'd in all
The simples and the science of that time,
Told him that her fine care had saved his life.
And the sick man forgot her simple blush,

Would call her friend and sister, sweet Elaine,
Would listen for her coming and regret
Her parting step, and held her tenderly,
And loved her with all love except the love
Of man and woman when they love their best,
Closest and sweetest, and had died the death
In any knightly fashion for her sake.
And peradventure had he seen her first
She might have made this and that other world
Another world for the sick man; but now
The shackles of an old love straiten'd him,
His honor rooted in dishonor stood,
And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.

Yet the great knight in his mid-sickness made
Full many a holy vow and pure resolve.
These, as but born of sickness, could not live;
For when the blood ran lustier in him again,
Full often the bright image of one face,
Making a treacherous quiet in his heart,
Dispersed his resolution like a cloud.
Then if the maiden, while that ghostly grace
Beam'd on his fancy, spoke, he answer'd not,
Or short and coldly, and she knew right well
What the rough sickness meant, but what this meant
She knew not, and the sorrow dimm'd her sight,
And drave her ere her time across the fields
Far into the rich city, where alone
She murmur'd, "Vain, in vain: it cannot be.
He will not love me: how then? must I die?"
Then as a little helpless innocent bird,
That has but one plain passage of few notes,
Will sing the simple passage o'er and o'er
For all an April morning, till the ear
Wearies to hear it, so the simple maid

Went half the night repeating, "Must I die?"
And now to right she turn'd, and now to left,
And found no ease in turning or in rest;
And "Him or death," she mutter'd, "death or him,"
Again and like a burthen, "Him or death."

But when Sir Lancelot's deadly hurt was whole,
To Astolat returning rode the three.
There morn by morn, arraying her sweet self
In that wherein she deem'd she look'd her best,
She came before Sir Lancelot, for she thought,
"If I be loved, these are my festal robes,
If not, the victim's flowers before he fall."
And Lancelot ever prest upon the maid
That she should ask some goodly gift of him
For her own self or hers: "and do not shun
To speak the wish most near to your true heart;
Such service have ye done me that I make
My will of yours, and prince and lord am I
In mine own land, and what I will I can."
Then like a ghost she lifted up her face,
But like a ghost without the power to speak.
And Lancelot saw that she withheld her wish,
And bode among them yet a little space
Till he should learn it; and one morn it chanced
He found her in among the garden yews,
And said, "Delay no longer, speak your wish,
Seeing I go to-day:" then out she brake:
"Going? and we shall never see you more.
And I must die for want of one bold word."
"Speak: that I live to hear," he said, "is yours."
Then suddenly and passionately she spoke:
"I have gone mad. I love you: let me die."
"Ah, sister," answer'd Lancelot, "what is this?"
And innocently extending her white arms,

"Your love," she said, "your love — to be your wife."
And Lancelot answer'd, "Had I chosen to wed,
I had been wedded earlier, sweet Elaine;
But now there never will be wife of mine."
"No, no," she cried, "I care not to be wife,
But to be with you still, to see your face,
To serve you, and to follow you thro' the world."
And Lancelot answer'd: "Nay, the world, the world,
All ear and eye, with such a stupid heart
To interpret ear and eye, and such a tongue
To blare its own interpretation — nay,
Full ill then should I quit your brother's love,
And your good father's kindness." And she said,
"Not to be with you, not to see your face —
Alas for me then, my good days are done!"
"Nay, noble maid," he answer'd, "ten times nay!
This is not love, but love's first flash in youth,
Most common: yea, I know it of mine own self;
And you yourself will smile at your own self
Hereafter, when you yield your flower of life
To one more fitly yours, not thrice your age.
And then will I, for true you are and sweet
Beyond mine old belief in womanhood,
More specially should your good knight be poor,
Endow you with broad land and territory
Even to the half my realm beyond the seas,
So that would make you happy: furthermore,
Even to the death, as tho' ye were my blood,
In all your quarrels will I be your knight.
This will I do, dear damsel, for your sake,
And more than this I cannot."

While he spoke
She neither blush'd nor shook, but deathly-pale
Stood grasping what was nearest, then replied,

"Of all this will I nothing;" and so fell,
And thus they bore her swooning to her tower.

Then spake, to whom thro' those black walls of yew
Their talk had pierced, her father: "Ay, a flash,
I fear me, that will strike my blossom dead.
Too courteous are ye, fair Lord Lancelot.
I pray you, use some rough discourtesy
To blunt or break her passion."

Lancelot said,
"That were against me: what I can I will;"
And there that day remain'd, and toward even
Sent for his shield: full meekly rose the maid,
Stript off the case, and gave the naked shield;
Then, when she heard his horse upon the stones,
Unclasping flung the casement back, and look'd
Down on his helm, from which her sleeve had gone.
And Lancelot knew the little clinking sound;
And she by tact of love was well aware
That Lancelot knew that she was looking at him.
And yet he glanced not up, nor waved his hand,
Nor bade farewell, but sadly rode away.
This was the one discourtesy that he used.

So in her tower alone the maiden sat:
His very shield was gone; only the case,
Her own poor work, her empty labor, left.
But still she heard him, still his picture form'd
And grew between her and the pictured wall.
Then came her father, saying in low tones,
"Have comfort," whom she greeted quietly.
Then came her brethren saying, "Peace to thee,
Sweet sister," whom she answer'd with all calm.
But when they left her to herself again,

Death, like a friend's voice from a distant field
Approaching thro' the darkness, call'd; the owls
Wailing had power upon her, and she mixt
Her fancies with the sallow-rifted glooms
Of evening and the moanings of the wind.

And in those days she made a little song,
And call'd her song "The Song of Love and Death,"
And sang it: sweetly could she make and sing.

"Sweet is true love tho' given in vain, in vain;
And sweet is death who puts an end to pain:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"Love, art thou sweet? then bitter death must be:
Love, thou art bitter; sweet is death to me.
O Love, if death be sweeter, let me die.

"Sweet love, that seems not made to fade away;
Sweet death, that seems to make us loveless clay:
I know not which is sweeter, no, not I.

"I fain would follow love, if that could be;
I needs must follow death, who calls for me;
Call and I follow, I follow! let me die."

High with the last line scaled her voice, and this,
All in a fiery dawning wild with wind
That shook her tower, the brothers heard, and thought
With shuddering, "Hark the Phantom of the house
That ever shrieks before a death," and call'd
The father, and all three in hurry and fear
Ran to her, and lo! the red-blood light of dawn
Flared on her face, she shrilling, "Let me die!"

As when we dwell upon a word we know,
Repeating, till the word we know so well
Becomes a wonder, and we know not why,
So dwelt the father on her face, and thought,
"Is this Elaine?" till back the maiden fell,
Then gave a languid hand to each, and lay,
Speaking a still good-morrow with her eyes.
At last she said: "Sweet brothers, yesternight
I seem'd a curious little maid again,
As happy as when we dwelt among the woods,
And when ye used to take me with the flood
Up the great river in the boatman's boat.
Only ye would not pass beyond the cape
That has the poplar on it: there ye fixt
Your limit, oft returning with the tide.
And yet I cried because ye would not pass
Beyond it, and far up the shining flood
Until we found the palace of the King.
And yet ye would not; but this night I dream'd
That I was all alone upon the flood,
And then I said, 'Now shall I have my will:'
And there I woke, but still the wish remain'd.
So let me hence that I may pass at last
Beyond the poplar and far up the flood,
Until I find the palace of the King.
There will I enter in among them all,
And no man there will dare to mock at me;
But there the fine Gawain will wonder at me,
But there the great Sir Lancelot muse at me;
Gawain, who bade a thousand farewells to me,
Lancelot, who coldly went, nor bade me one:
And there the King will know me and my love,
And there the Queen herself will pity me,
And all the gentle court will welcome me,
And after my long voyage I shall rest!"

"Peace," said her father, "O my child, ye seem
Light-headed, for what force is yours to go
So far, being sick? and wherefore would ye look
On this proud fellow again, who scorns us all?"

Then the rough Torre began to heave and move,
And bluster into stormy sobs and say:
"I never loved him: an I meet with him,
I care not howsoever great he be,
Then will I strike at him and strike him down;
Give me good fortune, I will strike him dead,
For this discomfort he hath done the house."

To whom the gentle sister made reply:
"Fret not yourself, dear brother, nor be wroth,
Seeing it is no more Sir Lancelot's fault
Not to love me than it is mine to love
Him of all men who seems to me the highest."

"Highest?" the father answer'd, echoing "highest?" —
He meant to break the passion in her — "nay,
Daughter, I know not what you call the highest;
But this I know, for all the people know it,
He loves the Queen, and in an open shame:
And she returns his love in open shame;
If this be high, what is it to be low?"

Then spake the lily maid of Astolat:
"Sweet father, all too faint and sick am I
For anger: these are slanders; never yet
Was noble man but made ignoble talk.
He makes no friend who never made a foe.
But now it is my glory to have loved
One peerless, without stain: so let me pass,
My father, howsoe'er I seem to you,

Not all unhappy, having loved God's best
And greatest, tho' my love had no return:
Yet, seeing you desire your child to live,
Thanks, but you work against your own desire;
For if I could believe the things you say
I should but die the sooner; wherefore cease,
Sweet father, and bid call the ghostly man
Hither, and let me shrive me clean and die."

So when the ghostly man had come and gone,
She, with a face bright as for sin forgiven,
Besought Lavaine to write as she devised
A letter, word for word; and when he ask'd,
"Is it for Lancelot, is it for my dear lord?
Then will I bear it gladly;" she replied,
"For Lancelot and the Queen and all the world,
But I myself must bear it." Then he wrote
The letter she devised; which being writ
And folded, "O sweet father, tender and true,
Deny me not," she said — "ye never yet
Denied my fancies — this, however strange,
My latest: lay the letter in my hand
A little ere I die, and close the hand
Upon it; I shall guard it even in death.
And when the heat has gone from out my heart,
Then take the little bed on which I died
For Lancelot's love, and deck it like the Queen's
For richness, and me also like the Queen
In all I have of rich, and lay me on it.
And let there be prepared a chariot-bier
To take me to the river, and a barge
Be ready on the river, clothed in black.
I go in state to court, to meet the Queen.
There surely I shall speak for mine own self,
And none of you can speak for me so well.

And therefore let our dumb old man alone
Go with me; he can steer and row, and he
Will guide me to that palace, to the doors."

She ceased: her father promised; whereupon
She grew so cheerful that they deem'd her death
Was rather in the fantasy than the blood.
But ten slow mornings past, and on the eleventh
Her father laid the letter in her hand,
And closed the hand upon it, and she died.
So that day there was dole in Astolat.

But when the next sun brake from underground,
Then, those two brethren slowly with bent brows
Accompanying, the sad chariot-bier
Past like a shadow thro' the field, that shone
Full-summer, to that stream whereon the barge,
Pall'd all its length in blackest samite, lay.
There sat the lifelong creature of the house,
Loyal, the dumb old servitor, on deck,
Winking his eyes, and twisted all his face.
So those two brethren from the chariot took
And on the black decks laid her in her bed,
Set in her hand a lily, o'er her hung
The silken case with braided blazonings,
And kiss'd her quiet brows, and saying to her,
"Sister, farewell forever," and again,
"Farewell, sweet sister," parted all in tears.
Then rose the dumb old servitor, and the dead,
Oar'd by the dumb, went upward with the flood—
In her right hand the lily, in her left
The letter — all her bright hair streaming down —
And all the coverlid was cloth of gold
Drawn to her waist, and she herself in white
All but her face, and that clear-featured face

Was lovely, for she did not seem as dead,
But fast asleep, and lay as tho' she smiled.

That day Sir Lancelot at the palace craved
Audience of Guinevere, to give at last
The price of half a realm, his costly gift,
Hard-won and hardly won with bruise and blow,
With deaths of others, and almost his own,
The nine-years-fought-for diamonds; for he saw
One of her house, and sent him to the Queen
Bearing his wish, whereto the Queen agreed
With such and so unmoved a majesty
She might have seem'd her statue, but that he,
Low-drooping till he wellnigh kiss'd her feet
For loyal awe, saw with a sidelong eye
The shadow of some piece of pointed lace,
In the Queen's shadow, vibrate on the walls,
And parted, laughing in his courtly heart.

All in an oriel on the summer side,
Vine-clad, of Arthur's palace toward the stream,
They met, and Lancelot kneeling utter'd: "Queen,
Lady, my liege, in whom I have my joy,
Take, what I had not won except for you,
These jewels, and make me happy, making them
An armlet for the roundest arm on earth,
Or necklace for a neck to which the swan's
Is tawnier than her cygnet's: these are words;
Your beauty is your beauty, and I sin
In speaking, yet O, grant my worship of it
Words, as we grant grief tears. Such sin in words,
Perchance, we both can pardon; but, my Queen,
I hear of rumors flying thro' your court.
Our bond, as not the bond of man and wife,
Should have in it an absoluter trust

To make up that defect: let rumors be:
When did not rumors fly? these, as I trust
That you trust me in your own nobleness,
I may not well believe that you believe."

While thus he spoke, half turn'd away, the Queen
Brake from the vast oriel-embowering vine
Leaf after leaf, and tore, and cast them off,
Till all the place whereon she stood was green;
Then, when he ceased, in one cold passive hand
Received at once and laid aside the gems
There on a table near her, and replied:

"It may be I am quicker of belief
Than you believe me, Lancelot of the Lake.
Our bond is not the bond of man and wife.
This good is in it, whatsoe'er of ill,
It can be broken easier. I for you
This many a year have done despite and wrong
To one whom ever in my heart of hearts
I did acknowledge nobler. What are these?
Diamonds for me! they had been thrice their worth
Being your gift, had you not lost your own.
To loyal hearts the value of all gifts
Must vary as the giver's. Not for me!
For her! for your new fancy. Only this
Grant me, I pray you: have your joys apart.
I doubt not that, however changed, you keep
So much of what is graceful: and myself
Would shun to break those bounds of courtesy
In which as Arthur's Queen I move and rule;
So cannot speak my mind. An end to this!
A strange one! yet I take it with Amen.
So pray you, add my diamonds to her pearls;
Deck her with these; tell her, she shines me down:

An armlet for an arm to which the Queen's
Is haggard, or a necklace for a neck
O, as much fairer — as a faith once fair
Was richer than these diamonds — hers, not mine —
Nay, by the mother of our Lord himself,
Or hers or mine, mine now to work my will —
She shall not have them."

Saying which she seized,
And, thro' the casement standing wide for heat,
Flung them, and down they flash'd, and smote the stream.
Then from the smitten surface flash'd, as it were,
Diamonds to meet them, and they passed away.
Then while Sir Lancelot leant, in half disdain
At love, life, all things, on the window ledge,
Close underneath his eyes, and right across
Where these had fallen, slowly past the barge
Whereon the lily maid of Astolat
Lay smiling, like a star in blackest night.

But the wild Queen, who saw not, burst away
To weep and wail in secret; and the barge,
On to the palace-doorway sliding, paused.
There two stood arm'd, and kept the door; to whom,
All up the marble stair, tier over tier,
Were added mouths that gaped, and eyes that ask'd,
"What is it?" but that oarsman's haggard face,
As hard and still as is the face that men
Shape to their fancy's eye from broken rocks
On some cliff-side, appall'd them, and they said:
"He is enchanted, cannot speak — and see,
Look how she sleeps — the Fairy Queen, so fair!
Yea, but how pale! what are they? flesh and blood?
Or come to take the King to Fairyland?

For some do hold our Arthur cannot die,
But that he passes into Fairyland."

While thus they babbled of the King, the King
Came girt with knights: then turn'd the tongueless man
From the half-face to the full eye, and rose
And pointed to the damsel and the doors.
So Arthur bade the meek Sir Percivale
And pure Sir Galahad to uplift the maid;
And reverently they bore her into hall.
Then came the fine Gawain and wonder'd at her,
And Lancelot later came and mused at her,
And last the Queen herself, and pitied her;
But Arthur spied the letter in her hand,
Stoopt, took, brake seal, and read it; this was all:

"Most noble lord, Sir Lancelot of the Lake,
I, sometime call'd the maid of Astolat,
Come, for you left me taking no farewell,
Hither, to take my last farewell of you.
I loved you, and my love had no return,
And therefore my true love has been my death.
And therefore to our Lady Guinevere,
And to all other ladies, I make moan:
Pray for my soul, and yield me burial.
Pray for my soul thou, too, Sir Lancelot,
As thou art a knight peerless."

Thus he read;
And ever in the reading lords and dames
Wept, looking often from his face who read
To hers which lay so silent, and at times,
So touch'd were they, half-thinking that her lips
Who had devised the letter moved again.

Then freely spoke Sir Lancelot to them all:
"My lord liege Arthur, and all ye that hear,
Know that for this most gentle maiden's death
Right heavy am I; for good she was and true,
But loved me with a love beyond all love
In women, whomsoever I have known.
Yet to be loved makes not to love again;
Not at my years, however it hold in youth.
I swear by truth and knighthood that I gave
No cause, not willingly, for such a love.
To this I call my friends in testimony,
Her brethren, and her father, who himself
Besought me to be plain and blunt, and use,
To break her passion, some discourtesy
Against my nature: what I could, I did.
I left her and I bade her no farewell;
Tho', had I dreamt the damsel would have died,
I might have put my wits to some rough use,
And help'd her from herself."

Then said the Queen—
Sea was her wrath, yet working after storm:
"Ye might at least have done her so much grace,
Fair lord, as would have help'd her from her death."
He raised his head, their eyes met and hers fell,
He adding:
"Queen, she would not be content
Save that I wedded her, which could not be.
Then might she follow me thro' the world, she ask'd;
It could not be. I told her that her love
Was but the flash of youth, would darken down,
To rise hereafter in a stiller flame
Toward one more worthy of her—then would I,
More specially were he she wedded poor,
Estate them with large land and territory

In mine own realm beyond the narrow seas,
To keep them in all joyance: more than this
I could not; this she would not, and she died."

He pausing, Arthur answer'd: "O my knight,
It will be to thy worship, as my knight,
And mine, as head of all our Table Round,
To see that she be buried worshipfully."

So toward that shrine which then in all the realm
Was richest, Arthur leading, slowly went
The marshall'd Order of their Table Round,
And Lancelot sad beyond his wont, to see
The maiden buried, not as one unknown,
Nor meanly, but with gorgeous obsequies,
And mass, and rolling music, like a queen.
And when the knights had laid her comely head
Low in the dust of half-forgotten kings,
Then Arthur spake among them: "Let her tomb
Be costly, and her image thereupon,
And let the shield of Lancelot at her feet
Be carven, and her lily in her hand.
And let the story of her dolorous voyage
For all true hearts be blazon'd on her tomb
In letters gold and azure!" which was wrought
Thereafter; but when now the lords and dames
And people, from the high door streaming, brake
Disorderly, as homeward each, the Queen,
Who mark'd Sir Lancelot where he moved apart,
Drew near, and sigh'd in passing, "Lancelot,
Forgive me; mine was jealousy in love."
He answer'd with his eyes upon the ground,
"That is love's curse; pass on, my Queen, forgiven."
But Arthur, who beheld his cloudy brows,
Approach'd him, and with full affection said:

"Lancelot, my Lancelot, thou in whom I have
Most joy and most affiance, for I know
What thou hast been in battle by my side,
And many a time have watch'd thee at the tilt
Strike down the lusty and long practised knight
And let the younger and unskill'd go by
To win his honor and to make his name,
And loved thy courtesies and thee, a man
Made to be loved; but now I would to God,
Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes,
Thou couldst have loved this maiden, shaped, it seems,
By God for thee alone, and from her face,
If one may judge the living by the dead,
Delicately pure and marvellously fair,
Who might have brought thee, now a lonely man
Wifeless and heirless, noble issue, sons
Born to the glory of thy name and fame,
My knight, the great Sir Lancelot of the Lake."

Then answer'd Lancelot: "Fair she was, my King,
Pure, as you ever wish your knights to be.
To doubt her fairness were to want an eye,
To doubt her pureness were to want a heart —
Yea, to be loved, if what is worthy love
Could bind him, but free love will not be bound."

"Free love, so bound, were freest," said the King.
"Let love be free; free love is for the best:
And, after heaven, on our dull side of death,
What should be best, if not so pure a love
Clothed in so pure a loveliness? yet thee
She fail'd to bind, tho' being, as I think,
Unbound as yet, and gentle, as I know."

And Lancelot answer'd nothing, but he went,
And at the inrunning of a little brook

Sat by the river in a cove, and watch'd
The high reed wave, and lifted up his eyes
And saw the barge that brought her moving down,
Far-off, a blot upon the stream, and said
Low in himself: "Ah, simple heart and sweet,
Ye loved me, damsel, surely with a love
Far tenderer than my Queen's. Pray for thy soul?
Ay, that will I. Farewell too — now at last —
Farewell, fair lily. 'Jealousy in love?'
Not rather dead love's harsh heir, jealous pride?
Queen, if I grant the jealousy as of love,
May not your crescent fear for name and fame,
Speak, as it waxes, of a love that wanes?
Why did the King dwell on my name to me?
Mine own name shames me, seeming a reproach,
Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake
Caught from his mother's arms — the wondrous one
Who passes thro' the vision of the night —
She chanted snatches of mysterious hymns
Heard on the winding waters, eve and morn
She kiss'd me saying, 'Thou art fair, my child,
As a king's son,' and often in her arms
She bare me, pacing on the dusky mere.
Would she had drown'd me in it, where'er it be!
For what am I? what profits me my name
Of greatest knight? I fought for it, and have it:
Pleasure to have it, none; to lose it, pain:
Now grown a part of me: but what use in it?
To make men worse by making my sin known?
Or sin seem less, the sinner seeming great?
Alas for Arthur's greatest knight, a man
Not after Arthur's heart! I needs must break
These bonds that so defame me: not without
She wills it: would I, if she will'd it? nay,
Who knows? but if I would not, then may God,

I pray Him, send a sudden angel down
To seize me by the hair and bear me far,
And fling me deep in that forgotten mere,
Among the tumbled fragments of the hills."

So groan'd Sir Lancelot in remorseful pain,
Not knowing he should die a holy man.

INTRODUCTION TO "THE PASSING OF ARTHUR."

The Fall of the Round Table and of Arthur's Model Realm. — With "The Passing of Arthur" the story of the Idylls comes to an end. The moral taint engendered by the sin of Lancelot and Guinevere, which first showed itself in "Geraint and Enid," and gathered strength in the succeeding Idylls, has infused its deadly poison throughout the system. The splendid circle of knights which Arthur had gathered around him, bound by vows of utter hardihood, utter gentleness, utter faithfulness in love, and uttermost obedience to the king, has been broken to fragments. The glory of the Round Table is no more, and the Order is split into feuds. The model realm of all that was noble falls in ruins, and with it the hopes of Arthur.

The Simplifying of the Story. — As the story of the Idylls draws to a close, it gradually divests itself of the many minor characters and details which the unfolding of the drama has introduced upon the scene. The throng of knights and ladies and miscellaneous personages has passed out of sight. Guinevere has retired to a nunnery to spend the rest of her days, and even Lancelot is but a memory. The grand central figure who dominates the whole system is left, forlorn and sad, with only one faithful knight, the first and latest, Sir Bedivere. Even in

this Idyll the simplifying process goes on, serving to heighten the dignity and impressiveness of the scene. "The flood of poetry which seemed to run shallower in some of the earlier poems, being spread over a wide area and divided into numerous rills, is now gathered up into a single stream, which is so much the more effective as it is deeper and more powerful."

The Final Act of the Drama. — "The Passing of Arthur" tells of the last battle and the end of Arthur's earthly career. Bereft of all who are dear to him, the king leads his forces to the west in pursuit of the traitor, Modred, and his followers. The two opposing hosts meet on the plains of Lyonnesse, and a great battle ensues. Arthur slays Modred with his own hand, and is himself mortally wounded. He is taken to a small chapel near by, and thence is carried to the island valley of Avilion. Though harassed by the failure of all his cherished hopes, and racked by pangs of doubt that almost conquer faith, he does not despair. He can still say

> "Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die.
> * * * * * * *
> King am I, whatsoever be their cry;"

and his last act in striking down the traitor of his house fitly crowns a life of kingly and knightly achievement.

"The Passing of Arthur" is in many ways the grandest of the Idylls. The story is taken, with some changes, from the twenty-first book of Malory. Lines 170–440 form the original fragment, "Morte d'Arthur," published in 1842, which, although written so many years before the rest

of the Idylls, is in the best Tennysonian vein. It is, as the poet himself classed it, "a Homeric echo." In its mastery of language, simplicity of diction, fine descriptive power, harmonious rhythm, and sustained dignity of tone, it reaches the highest rank of poetry. In "The Passing of Arthur" Tennyson has kept close to his original, both in his choice of incident and in the wording of many passages. But in addition to this he seems to have caught the spirit of weirdness, so characteristic of Keltic literature, which throws around the story a charm unique in itself. The style of the poem is purposely archaic; its whole tone is dignified and impressive; it contains many of the most picturesque passages to be found in the Idylls; it is replete with lofty sentiments that could come only from a great soul. It is the fitting close of a grand epic.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

That story which the bold Sir Bedivere,
First made and latest left of all the knights,
Told, when the man was no more than a voice
In the white winter of his age, to those
With whom he dwelt, new faces, other minds.

For on their march to westward, Bedivere,
Who slowly paced among the slumbering host,
Heard in his tent the moanings of the King:

"I found Him in the shining of the stars,
I mark'd Him in the flowering of His fields,
But in His ways with men I find Him not.
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.
O me! for why is all around us here
As if some lesser god had made the world,
But had not force to shape it as he would,
Till the High God behold it from beyond,
And enter it, and make it beautiful?
Or else as if the world were wholly fair,
But that these eyes of men are dense and dim,
And have not power to see it as it is:
Perchance, because we see not to the close;—
For I, being simple, thought to work His will,
And have but stricken with the sword in vain:
And all whereon I lean'd in wife and friend
Is traitor to my peace, and all my realm
Reels back into the beast, and is no more.

My God, thou hast forgotten me in my death:
Nay — God my Christ — I pass but shall not die."

Then, ere that last weird battle in the west,
There came on Arthur sleeping, Gawain kill'd
In Lancelot's war, the ghost of Gawain blown
Along a wandering wind, and past his ear
Went shrilling: "Hollow, hollow all delight!
Hail, King! to-morrow thou shalt pass away.
Farewell! there is an isle of rest for thee.
And I am blown along a wandering wind,
And hollow, hollow, hollow all delight!"
And fainter onward, like wild birds that change
Their season in the night and wail their way
From cloud to cloud, down the long wind the dream
Shrill'd; but in going mingled with dim cries
Far in the moonlit haze among the hills,
As of some lonely city sack'd by night,
When all is lost, and wife and child with wail
Pass to new lords; and Arthur woke and call'd:
"Who spake? A dream. O light upon the wind,
Thine, Gawain, was the voice — are these dim cries
Thine? or doth all that haunts the waste and wild
Mourn, knowing it will go along with me?"

This heard the bold Sir Bedivere and spake:
"O me, my King, let pass whatever will,
Elves, and the harmless glamour of the field;
But in their stead thy name and glory cling
To all high places like a golden cloud
Forever: but as yet thou shalt not pass.
Light was Gawain in life, and light in death
Is Gawain, for the ghost is as the man;
And care not thou for dreams from him, but rise —
I hear the steps of Modred in the west,

And with him many of thy people, and knights
Once thine, whom thou hast loved, but grosser grown
Than heathen, spitting at their vows and thee.
Right well in heart they know thee for the King.
Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Far other is this battle in the west
Whereto we move than when we strove in youth,
And brake the petty kings, and fought with Rome,
Or thrust the heathen from the Roman wall,
And shook him thro' the north. Ill doom is mine
To war against my people and my knights.
The king who fights his people fights himself.
And they my knights, who loved me once, the stroke
That strikes them dead is as my death to me.
Yet let us hence, and find or feel a way
Thro' this blind haze which, ever since I saw
One lying in the dust at Almesbury,
Hath folded in the passes of the world."

Then rose the King and moved his host by night,
And ever push'd Sir Modred, league by league,
Back to the sunset bound of Lyonnesse —
A land of old upheaven from the abyss
By fire, to sink into the abyss again;
Where fragments of forgotten peoples dwelt,
And the long mountains ended in a coast
Of ever-shifting sand, and far away
The phantom circle of a moaning sea.
There the pursuer could pursue no more,
And he that fled no further fly the King;
And there, that day when the great light of heaven
Burn'd at his lowest in the rolling year,
On the waste sand by the waste sea they closed.

Nor ever yet had Arthur fought a fight
Like this last, dim, weird battle of the west.
A death-white mist slept over sand and sea,
Whereof the chill, to him who breathed it, drew
Down with his blood, till all his heart was cold
With formless fear; and even on Arthur fell
Confusion, since he saw not whom he fought.
For friend and foe were shadows in the mist,
And friend slew friend not knowing whom he slew;
And some had visions out of golden youth,
And some beheld the faces of old ghosts
Look in upon the battle; and in the mist
Was many a noble deed, many a base,
And chance and craft and strength in single fights,
And ever and anon with host to host
Shocks, and the splintering spear, the hard mail hewn,
Shield-breakings, and the clash of brands, the crash
Of battle-axes on shatter'd helms, and shrieks
After the Christ, of those who falling down
Look'd up for heaven, and only saw the mist;
And shouts of heathen and the traitor knights,
Oaths, insult, filth, and monstrous blasphemies,
Sweat, writhings, anguish, laboring of the lungs
In that close mist, and cryings for the light,
Moans of the dying, and voices of the dead.

Last, as by some one deathbed after wail
Of suffering, silence follows, or thro' death
Or death-like swoon, thus over all that shore,
Save for some whisper of the seething seas,
A dead hush fell; but when the dolorous day
Grew drearier toward twilight falling, came
A bitter wind, clear from the north, and blew
The mist aside, and with that wind the tide
Rose, and the pale King glanced across the field

Of battle: but no man was moving there;
Nor any cry of Christian heard thereon,
Nor yet of heathen; only the wan wave
Brake in among dead faces, to and fro
Swaying the helpless hands, and up and down
Tumbling the hollow helmets of the fallen,
And shiver'd brands that once had fought with Rome,
And rolling far along the gloomy shores
The voice of days of old and days to be.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere,
And whiter than the mist that all day long
Had held the field of battle was the King:

"Hearest thou this great voice that shakes the world,
And wastes the narrow realm whereon we move,
And beats upon the faces of the dead,
My dead, as tho' they had not died for me? —
O Bedivere, for on my heart hath fallen
Confusion, till I know not what I am,
Nor whence I am, nor whether I be king;
Behold, I seem but king among the dead."

Then spake the bold Sir Bedivere: "My King;
King everywhere! and so the dead have kings,
There also will I worship thee as king.
Yet still thy life is whole, and still I live
Who love thee; but who hates thee, he that brought
The heathen back among us, yonder stands,
Modred, unharm'd, the traitor of thine house."

Then spake the King: "My house hath been my doom.
But call not thou this traitor of my house
Who hath but dwelt beneath one roof with me.
My house are rather they who swear my vows,

Yea, even while they brake them, own'd me king.
And well for thee, saying in my dark hour,
When all the purport of my throne hath fail'd,
That quick or dead thou holdest me for king.
King am I, whatsoever be their cry;
And one last act of kinghood shalt thou see
Yet, ere I pass." And uttering this the King
Made at the man: then Modred smote his liege
Hard on that helm which many a heathen sword
Had beaten thin; while Arthur at one blow,
Striking the last stroke with Excalibur,
Slew him, and, all but slain himself, he fell.

So all day long the noise of battle roll'd
Among the mountains by the winter sea;
Until King Arthur's Table, man by man,
Had fallen in Lyonnesse about their lord,
King Arthur. Then, because his wound was deep,
The bold Sir Bedivere uplifted him,
And bore him to a chapel nigh the field,
A broken chancel with a broken cross,
That stood on a dark strait of barren land:
On one side lay the Ocean, and on one
Lay a great water, and the moon was full.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"The sequel of to-day unsolders all
The goodliest fellowship of famous knights
Whereof this world holds record. Such a sleep
They sleep — the men I loved. I think that we
Shall never more, at any future time,
Delight our souls with talk of knightly deeds,
Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.
I perish by this people which I made, —

Tho' Merlin sware that I should come again
To rule once more; but, let what will be be,
I am so deeply smitten thro' the helm
That without help I cannot last till morn.
Thou therefore take my brand Excalibur,
Which was my pride: for thou rememberest how
In those old days, one summer noon, an arm
Rose up from out the bosom of the lake,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
Holding the sword — and how I row'd across
And took it, and have worn it, like a king;
And, wheresoever I am sung or told
In aftertime, this also shall be known.
But now delay not: take Excalibur,
And fling him far into the middle mere;
Watch what thou seest, and lightly bring me word."

To him replied the bold Sir Bedivere:
"It is not meet, Sir King, to leave thee thus,
Aidless, alone, and smitten thro' the helm —
A little thing may harm a wounded man;
Yet I thy hest will all perform at full,
Watch what I see, and lightly bring thee word."

So saying, from the ruin'd shrine he stept,
And in the moon athwart the place of tombs,
Where lay the mighty bones of ancient men,
Old knights, and over them the sea-wind sang
Shrill, chill, with flakes of foam. He, stepping down
By zigzag paths and juts of pointed rock,
Came on the shining levels of the lake.

There drew he forth the brand Excalibur,
And o'er him, drawing it, the winter moon,
Brightening the skirts of a long cloud, ran forth

And sparkled keen with frost against the hilt;
For all the haft twinkled with diamond sparks,
Myriads of topaz-lights, and jacinth-work
Of subtlest jewellery. He gazed so long
That both his eyes were dazzled as he stood,
This way and that dividing the swift mind,
In act to throw: but at the last it seem'd
Better to leave Excalibur conceal'd
There in the many-knotted water-flags,
That whistled stiff and dry about the marge.
So strode he back slow to the wounded King.

Then spake King Arthur to Sir Bedivere:
"Hast thou perform'd my mission which I gave?
What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
And the wild water lapping on the crag."

To whom replied King Arthur, faint and pale:
"Thou hast betray'd thy nature and thy name,
Not rendering true answer, as beseem'd
Thy fealty, nor like a noble knight;
For surer sign had follow'd, either hand,
Or voice, or else a motion of the mere.
This is a shameful thing for men to lie.
Yet now, I charge thee, quickly go again,
As thou art lief and dear, and do the thing
I bade thee, watch, and lightly bring me word."

Then went Sir Bedivere the second time
Across the ridge, and paced beside the mere,
Counting the dewy pebbles, fixt in thought;
But when he saw the wonder of the hilt,

How curiously and strangely chased, he smote
His palms together, and he cried aloud:

"And if indeed I cast the brand away,
Surely a precious thing, one worthy note,
Should thus be lost forever from the earth,
Which might have pleased the eyes of many men.
What good should follow this, if this were done?
What harm, undone? Deep harm to disobey,
Seeing obedience is the bond of rule.
Were it well to obey then, if a king demand
An act unprofitable, against himself?
The King is sick, and knows not what he does
What record or what relic of my lord
Should be to aftertime, but empty breath
And rumors of a doubt? But were this kept,
Stored in some treasure-house of mighty kings,
Some one might show it at a joust of arms,
Saying: 'King Arthur's sword, Excalibur,
Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake.
Nine years she wrought it, sitting in the deeps
Upon the hidden bases of the hills.'
So might some old man speak in the aftertime
To all the people, winning reverence.
But now much honor and much fame were lost."

So spake he, clouded with his own conceit,
And hid Excalibur the second time,
And so strode back slow to the wounded King.

Then spoke King Arthur, breathing heavily:
"What is it thou hast seen? or what hast heard?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"I heard the water lapping on the crag,
And the long ripple washing in the reeds."

To whom replied King Arthur, much in wrath:
"Ah miserable, and unkind, untrue,
Unknightly, traitor-hearted! Woe is me!
Authority forgets a dying king,
Laid widow'd of the power in his eye
That bow'd the will. I see thee what thou art,
For thou, the latest-left of all my knights,
In whom should meet the offices of all,
Thou wouldst betray me for the precious hilt;
Either from lust of gold, or like a girl
Valuing the giddy pleasure of the eyes.
Yet, for a man may fail in duty twice,
And the third time may prosper, get thee hence;
But, if thou spare to fling Excalibur,
I will arise and slay thee with my hands."

Then quickly rose Sir Bedivere, and ran,
And, leaping down the ridges lightly, plunged
Among the bulrush beds, and clutch'd the sword,
And strongly wheel'd and threw it. The great brand
Made lightnings in the splendor of the moon,
And flashing round and round, and whirl'd in an arch,
Shot like a streamer of the northern morn,
Seen where the moving isles of winter shock
By night, with noises of the Northern Sea.
So flash'd and fell the brand Excalibur;
But ere he dipt the surface, rose an arm
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
And caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere.
And lightly went the other to the King.

Then spoke King Arthur, drawing thicker breath:
"Now see I by thine eyes that this is done.
Speak out: what is it thou hast heard, or seen?"

And answer made the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Sir King, I closed mine eyelids, lest the gems
Should blind my purpose, for I never saw,
Nor shall see, here or elsewhere, till I die,
Not tho' I live three lives of mortal men,
So great a miracle as yonder hilt.
Then with both hands I flung him, wheeling him;
But when I look'd again, behold an arm,
Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful,
That caught him by the hilt, and brandish'd him
Three times, and drew him under in the mere."

And answer made King Arthur, breathing hard:
"My end draws nigh; 'tis time that I were gone.
Make broad thy shoulders to receive my weight,
And bear me to the margin; yet I fear
My wound hath taken cold, and I shall die."

So saying, from the pavement he half rose,
Slowly, with pain, reclining on his arm,
And looking wistfully with wide blue eyes
As in a picture. Him Sir Bedivere
Remorsefully regarded thro' his tears,
And would have spoken, but he found not words;
Then took with care, and kneeling on one knee,
O'er both his shoulders drew the languid hands,
And rising bore him thro' the place of tombs.

But, as he walk'd, King Arthur panted hard,
Like one that feels a nightmare on his bed
When all the house is mute. So sigh'd the King,
Muttering and murmuring at his ear, "Quick, quick!
I fear it is too late, and I shall die."
But the other swiftly strode from ridge to ridge,
Clothed with his breath, and looking, as he walk'd,

Larger than human on the frozen hills.
He heard the deep behind him, and a cry
Before. His own thought drove him like a goad.
Dry clash'd his harness in the icy caves
And barren chasms, and all to left and right
The bare black cliff clang'd round him, as he based
His feet on juts of slippery crag that rang
Sharp-smitten with the dint of armed heels —
And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
And the long glories of the winter moon!

Then saw they how there hove a dusky barge,
Dark as a funeral scarf from stem to stern,
Beneath them; and descending they were ware
That all the decks were dense with stately forms,
Black-stoled, black-hooded, like a dream — by these
Three queens with crowns of gold: and from them rose
A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars,
And, as it were one voice, an agony
Of lamentation, like a wind that shrills
All night in a waste land, where no one comes,
Or hath come, since the making of the world.

Then murmur'd Arthur, "Place me in the barge."
So to the barge they came. There those three queens
Put forth their hands, and took the King, and wept.
But she that rose the tallest of them all
And fairest laid his head upon her lap,
And loosed the shatter'd casque, and chafed his hands,
And call'd him by his name, complaining loud,
And dropping bitter tears against a brow
Striped with dark blood: for all his face was white
And colorless, and like the wither'd moon
Smote by the fresh beam of the springing east;
And all his greaves and cuisses dash'd with drops

Of onset; and the light and lustrous curls—
That made his forehead like a rising sun
High from the dais-throne—were parch'd with dust,
Or, clotted into points and hanging loose,
Mixt with the knightly growth that fringed his lips.
So like a shatter'd column lay the King;
Not like that Arthur who, with lance in rest,
From spur to plume a star of tournament,
Shot thro' the lists at Camelot, and charged
Before the eyes of ladies and of kings.

Then loudly cried the bold Sir Bedivere:
"Ah! my Lord Arthur, whither shall I go?
Where shall I hide my forehead and my eyes?
For now I see the true old times are dead,
When every morning brought a noble chance,
And every chance brought out a noble knight.
Such times have been not since the light that led
The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh.
But now the whole Round Table is dissolved
Which was an image of the mighty world,
And I, the last, go forth companionless,
And the days darken round me, and the years,
Among new men, strange faces, other minds."

And slowly answer'd Arthur from the barge:
"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils Himself in many ways,
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.
Comfort thyself: what comfort is in me?
I have lived my life, and that which I have done
May He within Himself make pure! but thou,
If thou shouldst never see my face again,
Pray for my soul. More things are wrought by prayer
Than this world dreams of. Wherefore, let thy voice

Rise like a fountain for me night and day.
For what are men better than sheep or goats
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands of prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God.
But now farewell. I am going a long way
With these thou seest—if indeed I go—
For all my mind is clouded with a doubt—
To the island-valley of Avilion;
Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea,
Where I will heal me of my grievous wound."

So said he, and the barge with oar and sail
Moved from the brink, like some full-breasted swan
That, fluting a wild carol ere her death,
Ruffles her pure cold plume, and takes the flood
With swarthy webs. Long stood Sir Bedivere
Revolving many memories, till the hull
Look'd one black dot against the verge of dawn,
And on the mere the wailing died away.

But when that moan had past for evermore,
The stillness of the dead world's winter dawn
Amazed him, and he groan'd, "The King is gone."
And therewithal came on him the weird rhyme,
"From the great deep to the great deep he goes."

Whereat he slowly turn'd and slowly clomb
The last hard footstep of that iron crag,
Thence mark'd the black hull moving yet, and cried:

"He passes to be king among the dead,
And after healing of his grievous wound
He comes again; but — if he come no more —
O me, be yon dark queens in yon black boat,
Who shriek'd and wail'd, the three whereat we gazed
On that high day, when, clothed with living light,
They stood before his throne in silence, friends
Of Arthur, who should help him at his need?"

Then from the dawn it seem'd there came, but faint
As from beyond the limit of the world,
Like the last echo born of a great cry,
Sounds, as if some fair city were one voice
Around a king returning from his wars.

Thereat once more he moved about, and clomb
Even to the highest he could climb, and saw,
Straining his eyes beneath an arch of hand,
Or thought he saw, the speck that bare the King,
Down that long water opening on the deep
Somewhere far off, pass on and on, and go
From less to less and vanish into light.
And the new sun rose bringing the new year.

NOTES.

THE COMING OF ARTHUR.

Line 1. "Leodogran, the King of Cameliard." These names are variously spelled Leodograunce, Leodegan, Lodegrean, and Camelerd, Camelyarde, and Camelyard. Like all Tennyson's geographical places Cameliard is a mystical locality, although in some old romances is mentioned a district called Carmelide, the capital of which was Carohaise.

Line 4. "Guinevere." See introduction to "Lancelot and Elaine."

Line 5. "For many a petty king." Geoffrey of Monmouth in his "Chronicle" gives a list of these kings, among them Brutus, Locrine (mentioned in Milton's "Comus"), Cassibellaunus (see Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*), Leir (Shakespeare's *Lear*), Lucius, Octavius, Constantine, Vortigern, and Constantine's sons, Aurelius, Ambrosius, and Uther.

Line 8. "The heathen host," the Saxons.

Line 13. "Aurelius" (called Aurelius Emrys in "Gareth and Lynette"), "a descendant of the last Roman general who claimed the purple as an Emperor of Britain." (Green.) Geoffrey describes him as defeating Vortigern, conquering the Saxons, and beheading Hengist. He is finally poisoned by a Saxon, and buried at Stonehenge.

Line 14 "And after him King Uther," the reputed father of Arthur. Geoffrey says that he caused two golden dragons to be made in imitation of that which he had seen in Uther's comet's tail; one of these he solemnly offered up in the church at Winchester, and the other he adopted as the royal standard; whence he was afterwards called Pen-Dragon or Dragon's head. He conquered various rebellious people, and after many battles was poisoned by the Saxons and buried at Stonehenge.

Line 17. Malory says, "But within few yeares after King Arthur wonne all the North, Scotland and all that were under their obeysance, also a part of Wales held against King Arthur, but hee overcame them

all, as hee did the remnant, and all through the noble prowesse of himselfe and his knights of the Round Table."

"The Table Round," the order of knighthood established by King Arthur. It took its name from a large round table at which the king and his knights sat for meals. Various accounts are given of this table; some say that there were 150 seats, and that the table was originally constructed to imitate the shape of the world, which was supposed to be flat and circular in form; others say that the table was originally constructed by Merlin, the wizard, for Uther Pendragon, who presented it to Leodogran, who in turn sent it and 100 knights with Guinevere to Arthur as a wedding gift. One of the seats was called the *Siege Perilous*, because it swallowed up any unchaste person who sat in it. Galahad, the pure, was the only knight who could occupy it with safety. Other accounts say that the Round Table was constructed in imitation of the table used by Christ and His disciples at the Last Supper; that it contained 13 seats, and that the seat originally occupied by Christ was always empty except when occupied by the Holy Grail.

Lines 28–33. Dr. Rolfe says that there are authentic records of human children suckled by wolves. Such children always prove to be idiots, and never arrive at maturity.

Line 36. "Urien," also called Ryence, King of North Wales. Malory makes him the husband of Arthur's sister, Morgan le Fay.

Line 56. Malory says, "And there had King Arthur the first sight of Guenever, daughter unto King Leodegraunce, and ever after he loved her."

Line 72. "The son of Gorlois." Malory calls him "the duke of Tintagel" in "Cornewayle." Tintagell is a small town in Cornwall on the coast of the British Channel, about four miles from Camelford. The ruins of the castle, so celebrated in mediæval romance, may still be seen on a cliff overlooking the sea.

Line 73. "Anton," the Sir Ector of Malory. In the "Romance of Merlin" he is called Sir Antour.

Line 80. Note the allegorical significance; the Soul hopes to lift the Senses to a level with itself.

Lines 84–93. Arthur is to be more than the ideal king — the ruler of men; he is to be the ideal man, and so he must love. No work without love; equal love of woman and work. Woman is the complement of man; man's ideal state can be found only in wedded happiness, and only in such a union can the purpose of his life be fulfilled aright. This is the moral theme of the whole "Princess."

Line 94. "As he speaks," etc. The poet refers to himself.

Lines 95 *et seq.* "A field of battle bright." Contrast the bright picture of this great battle at the beginning of Arthur's rule with the "last dim, weird battle of the west" in "The Passing of Arthur." Note, too, the stirring description of the conflict.

Line 103. "The long-lanced battle let their horses run." Mallory says, "Then either battaile let their horses run as fast as they might."

"Battle," the main body of an army.

Line 111. "Carádos, Urien," etc. All this list of names is to be found in Malory.

Line 120. "Ho! they yield!" *Ho* is the formal exclamation of a commander in battle to order a cessation of hostilities.

Line 124. "His warrior . . . most." Sir Lancelot of the Lake. See introduction to "Lancelot and Elaine."

Line 127. "The fire of God," etc. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," line 314.

Line 131. It was a common custom in the days of chivalry for the two knights to bind themselves thus.

Line 132. "Man's word," etc. Littledale paraphrases it thus: "A man's promise is a divine thing, therefore it must be regarded as especially sacred."

Lines 140 *et seq.* In Leodogran's doubt as to Arthur's origin, and in the different accounts of his birth, we may note the way in which different minds confront the problem of the origin and true place of the soul.

Line 150. "Merlin, the wise man." According to Geoffrey, Merlin had been court magician since the time of Vortigern. Morley in his "English Writers" says, "The true history of Merlin seems to be that he was born between the years 470 and 480, and during the invasion of the Saxons took the name of Ambrose, which preceded the name of Merlin, from the successful leader of the Britons, Ambrosius Aurelianus, who was his first chief, and from whose service he passed into that of King Arthur."

In the Idylls Merlin represents the powers of intellect and imagination, of which the soul must make use in its warfare.

Line 152. "*Bleys*," or Bleyse, according to tradition, was a holy hermit who had protected the mother of Merlin from the fiend who was Merlin's father, and had undertaken Merlin's education from infancy.

Line 155. Malory, I. 15 says: "And so Bleyse wrote the battayle word by worde as Merlyn told him, how it began, and by whom, and in like wise howe it was ended and who had the worst. All the bat-

tayles that were done in Arthur's dayes Merlyn caused Bleyse his master to write them."

"Sat him down," *him* is in the dative case, a common construction in old English.

Line 166 alludes to the habit of the cuckoo, which lays its eggs in the nests of other birds for them to hatch. The young cuckoo in time tries to oust the young of the rightful owner, and is in turn set upon by them, so Arthur is attacked by his lords as being wrongly king.

Line 173. "Bedivere." The character of Bedivere, "first made and latest left of all the knights," is consistently painted throughout the Idylls. He is a plain, blunt, honest man, little troubled about the doubts and difficulties that beset the right of Arthur's rule. He feels that Arthur is the true king, and never swerves from his loyalty.

Line 187. "Ygerne," *Igraine* in Malory.

Line 188. "Daughters had she borne him." These are called by Malory *Margawse*, *Elaine*, and *Morgan le Fay*. Margawse is the *Bellicent* of Tennyson.

Line 189. "Lot's wife . . . Bellicent." In the old romances Lot is the king of Lothian and Orkney. He married the eldest daughter of Gorlois and Ygerne, known in the romances as *Margawse*. Tennyson has changed her name to Bellicent, a name found in the "Romance of Merlin," and also frequently occurring in other mediæval legends.

Line 204. According to Malory, Uther lived two years after Arthur's birth, and when dying bequeathed the kingdom to his infant son.

Line 208. Cf. this version of Arthur's birth with that in "Guinevere," lines 282–293.

Note that Arthur is born on "the night of the new year," and passes on the last night of the year.

Line 223. Malory calls Arthur Sir Kay's nourished brother.

Line 233. "Yet Merlin thro' his craft," etc. Tennyson constantly eliminates supernatural and miraculous incidents from the narrative, not wishing to mingle mediæval magic with Christian mysteries. Arthur is crowned through Merlin's craft, and no reference is made to pulling the miraculous sword from the rock.

Line 243. "Gawain and young Modred." Gawain was the eldest son of Lot, king of Orkney, and Bellicent. In the old chronicles he stands equal to Lancelot in honor. Gawain is the romance form of Galwanus, the Latinized form of Gwalchmai, a great Celtic hero, celebrated by the old bards for his wise counsel and persuasive eloquence. The Gawain of Tennyson is a very different character.

See "Lancelot and Elaine," 551, note. "Modred," also a son of Lot and Bellicent. He is the villain of the Idylls, standing for deceit and jealousy. In some of the old romances he is the son of Arthur and Bellicent, and the instrument of divine vengeance to punish Arthur for his sins. Throughout the Idylls he is the same abhorrent character, finally becoming an open traitor, and striking for the throne. He is unsuccessful, but he involves Arthur in his ruin.

Line 247. The iceberg floats from the Arctic regions to the warmer waters of the south, which, washing its base, melt the ice, and cause the berg to topple over; hence the force of the figure.

Line 252. "Hath body enow," *i.e.* has strength enough.

Lines 259–265. These lines are considered by many to be the finest in the poem.

Line 261. "So strait vows." What these vows were may be learned by consulting "Gareth and Lynette," lines 541–544, and "Guinevere," lines 460–474.

Lines 269–270. "From eye to eye . . . of the King." "He smites his own spirit into those who love him, so that, when his knights swear allegiance, into every face there comes —

'A momentary likeness of the King.'"

Lines 271–273. "Thro' the cross . . . over Arthur," *i.e.* through the stained glass window with the picture of Christ on the Cross.

Line 274. "Vert, and azure," heraldic names for green and blue.

Line 275. "Three fair queens," Faith, Hope, and Charity. These three queens receive Arthur into the black barge when he passes away. See "The Passing of Arthur," line 451.

Line 282. "The Lady of the Lake." She symbolizes the Church, or Religion. She is mystic and wonderful. "She knows a subtler magic" than Merlin, because the spiritual is higher and deeper than the purely intellectual. She gives Arthur his sword Excalibur, 'whereby to drive the heathen out,' which is, of course, the sword of the Spirit, wherewith the Soul is to wage war with Sin. The deep waters, with the eternal calm, wherein the Lady of the Lake dwells, and from which the nine-year-wrought sword arises, show us the source from which the spiritual weapon is to be derived. It is fashioned by no earthly hand, but must be sought, with the aid of religion, by long communings with the Infinite and the Eternal." (Elsdale.)

Line 285. "She gave the king his huge cross-hilted sword." Malory, I, 23, describes the gift of the sword thus: "And as they rode, Arthur said, I have no sword. No force, said Merlin, hereby is

a sword that shall be yours and I may. So they rode till they came to a lake, the which was a fair water and a broad, and in the midst of the lake Arthur was ware of an arm clothed in white samite, that held a sword in that hand. Lo, said Merlin, yonder is that sword that I spake of. With that they saw a damsel going upon the lake. What is that? said Arthur. That is the Lady of the Lake, said Merlin." She tells Arthur to row over and take the sword, which he does. In the "Romance of Merlin" Excalibur is identical with the sword that Merlin set in the stone. Malory distinguishes between the two.

"Cross-hilted." The swords of Christian knights had a cross-shaped hilt, symbolic of their religious belief. It was often used as a sacred emblem on which oaths were taken, and served to remind them of their vows.

Line 294. "Excalibur." In Malory the Lady of the Lake says, "The name of it is Excalibur, that is as much to say as Cut-steel." Others say it is a Hebrew word meaning cut-iron.

Line 298. The jewelled hilt is more fully described in "The Passing of Arthur," lines 224–226, "elfin Urim" denote magic jewels. The *Urim*, a Hebrew plural meaning "flames," were sparkling ornaments worn anciently by the Jewish High Priest when giving oracular responses. They are mentioned frequently in the Old Testament.

Lines 299–300. "So bright," etc. Malory says, "So bright in the enemies' eyes that it gave light like thirty torches."

Line 301. "Graven in the oldest tongue," etc., *i.e.* the Hebrew.

Line 312. "The swallow and the swift," etc. The "swift" is the "black swallow," hence "near akin."

Line 314. By assuming the relationship between Bellicent and Arthur, Leodogran covertly tests its truth. Bellicent evades a direct reply, but expresses a doubt as to Arthur's kinship to herself.

Lines 319–324. "The conduct of the two sons of Queen Bellicent is significant of their characters and future positions in the general drama. Gawain, the giddy and impulsive boy, will develop into the reckless and pleasure-seeking, but valiant knight; and Modred, who now listens at the door, will be the crafty traitor hereafter." (Elsdale.)

Lines 338 *et seq.* Bellicent's account of her first meeting with Arthur is one of Tennyson's many pictures of domestic tenderness. It is probably introduced to restore the humanity of the story, for the magic story of Bleys immediately follows, symbolizing the idea, ever present with Tennyson, of the coming of the soul into the world from the high heaven and out of the great deep.

Line 358. This account of Arthur's origin is the poet's own addition to the old legends; and is probably introduced for its symbolic significance as explained above.

Line 362. "Shrunk like a fairy changeling." It was an accepted belief in fairy legend that wicked fairies had the power to substitute an imp of their own species for a human child. The changeling was soon recognized, however, by its peevishness and shrivelled appearance; it often resembled a little old man with a face full of puckers and wrinkles.

Line 379. "A ninth one." Note that Arthur is borne in from the great deep on the *ninth* wave. Nine is the favorite number in English magic lore. The old Welsh bards allude frequently to this wave as being larger and stronger than the others.

Line 401. "In riddling triplets." Cf. "Gareth and Lynette," lines 280–282. The old Welsh bards wrote in stanzas of three rhyming lines, from which sprung the Welsh Triads.

Lines 402–410. Merlin's "riddling triplets" give Queen Bellicent little satisfaction, but perhaps no more definite answer could be expected to the question, whence comes the soul, than that it comes "from the great deep," and "to the great deep goes." Some of Merlin's expressions, however, may have a definite reference to Bellicent's tale; thus, "a young man will be wiser," etc., may mean that Arthur will know more by experience than to hope for impossibilities; "an old man's wit" may refer to Bleys's mind growing weak and wandering, etc.

Lines 420–421. It was a common belief that Arthur would come again. Littledale says it is still prevalent in Brittany. Such a belief in a second coming is found in many of the legends of ancient heroes, like Charlemagne, Barbarossa, Tell, and Harold.

Lines 426 *et seq.* Leodogran, still in doubt, has a prophetic vision, foreshadowing Arthur's fortunes. Arthur himself is a phantom king, driving his foes before him, and standing out at last in the heavens transfigured and crowned. This vision convinces Leodogran, and he gives Guinevere in marriage to Arthur.

Line 447. Sir Lancelot does not appear in Malory until the sixth book, but Tennyson brings him in from the first to intensify the ties between him and Arthur, and to emphasize the enormity of Lancelot's breach of faith.

Line 449. Note the appropriateness of the season.

Line 452. "Dubric," Archbishop of Caerleon-on-Usk, primate of Britain, and legate of the pope.

Line 455. Note the beautiful literature of the marriage scene and the coronation song. "It embodies the thought of the poem, and grips the whole meaning of it together." Thus the Spirit is joined to the Flesh, surrounded and cheered on by all the powers and influences that can ever help it.

Line 468. "With drooping eyes." What is the significance of this phrase? Was it due to the consciousness that her heart was not the king's?

Line 476. "Great Lords from Rome," ambassadors who had come to demand the ancient tribute. Geoffrey says, "Twelve men of an advanced age and venerable aspect, and bearing olive branches in their right hands, for a token that they were come upon an embassy."

Lines 481–501. This battle-chant of Arthur's knights is composed in stiff and abrupt rhythm that gives the lines a sort of warlike clang, in unison with the sounding trumpets. "Its sound is the sound of martial triumph, of victorious weapons in battle, and of knights in arms. . . . It is a splendid effort of art. King Olaf might have sung it." (Brooke.)

Line 513. "And Arthur strove with Rome." Littledale remarks: "In the curt answer to the Roman envoys, and the words 'Arthur strove with Rome,' the poet in a few lines disposes of an amount of pseudo-history that occupies nearly half of Geoffrey's entire narrative. But even Tennyson's brief allusion to Arthur's Roman war has no foundation in history."

Line 517. "Twelve great battles." See "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 286 *et seq.*

NOTES.

GARETH AND LYNETTE.

Line 1. Note the abruptness with which the poem begins. It is characteristic of Tennyson to begin his Idylls rather abruptly, often at some central point. Cf. the beginnings of "Geraint and Enid" and "Lancelot and Elaine."

"Lot." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 189.

"Bellicent." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 189.

Line 2. "Gareth." The name given by Mallory, but in the old French romances it is commonly given as "Guerrehes." Tennyson makes him the younger brother of Gawain and Modred, differing somewhat from Malory. "Truly, then, said he, my name is Gareth of Orkney, and King Lot was my father, and my mother is King Arthur's sister; her name is dame Morgause, and Sir Gawaine is my brother, and Sir Agravaine, and Sir Gaheris, and I am the youngest of them all." "Morte d'Arthur," VII, 13.

"In a showerful spring." Note how appropriately the idyll opens with spring. The whole poem represents the spring time of Arthur's glory.

Line 3. "Spate," a Gaelic word which gives a touch of local color.

Lines 3–10. Study the vivid figure of speech. Note how closely Tennyson observed Nature, and how suggestive the rhythm is of the sense. Compare lines 8 and 13 for difference in rhythmic effect.

Line 18. "Heaven yield her for it." Note the use of "yield" in the sense of "reward." (See Glossary.) Compare Shakespeare's "Antony and Cleopatra," IV, 2, 33, "And the gods yield you for't." It is a common Elizabethan use of the term.

Lines 20–24. Note again the vividness of the metaphor, heightened by the use of such rare terms as "ever-highering." Gareth's whole thought is centred on becoming a knight of Arthur.

Line 24. "Working out his will." Compare "The Coming of Arthur," lines 92–93: —

> "Have power on this dark land to lighten it,
> And power on this dead world to make it live."

See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243.

Line 25. "Gawain." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243, and "Lancelot and Elaine," line 551.

Line 26. "Modred." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 243.

Line 40. "The goose and golden eggs." See Tennyson's poem, "The Goose."

Line 46. "Thy Book of Hours," a book containing the prayers prescribed by the Church for the various hours of the day, and ornamented by colored initial letters and pictures, illustrative of the text.

Line 51. "A leash of kings." Used loosely for a number of kings. "Leash" properly means a thong by which three dogs are held, thence it came to be used of three or more persons taken together.

Line 66. "The brand Excalibur." "Brand" means properly a burning stick, but is used poetically for sword, from its flashing blade. "Excalibur." See "The Coming of Arthur" lines 294–304, and "The Passing of Arthur," lines 220–225.

Line 67. "And lightnings play'd about it in the storm." See "The Passing of Arthur," lines 301–307.

Lines 73–80. This account of Lot is at variance with that of Malory, who says that Lot was slain in battle by Pellinore.

Line 76. "The barons' war." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 63–133.

Line 91. "Mightier day by day," but mightier in mere brute strength, in striking contrast to that of which Arthur's knighthood sang at his coronation. See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 496–497. Note that at every step Bellicent is destroying the effect of her own pleading by what she proposes.

Line 100. Gareth's parable of "Fame and Shame" seems rather forced. Compare the allegory of "Guilt and Shame," in "The Vicar of Wakefield."

Line 105. "Good lack," equivalent to "Good Lord."

Line 116. "Follow the deer? follow the Christ, the King." Note the contrast. Arthur is distinctively the Christian king; and in the following lines Gareth expresses the ideal of Arthur's knighthood.

Line 120. "Proven King." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 176–236, 315–423.

Line 133. "Who swept the dust of ruin'd Rome," etc. See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 510–513.

Line 135. "The idolaters," the Saxons. Arthur had overcome them in "twelve great battles." See "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 285–316.

Line 147. Note the two uses of "quick." Not particularly good taste in dignified poetry.

"To prove to the quick" is to prove by a wound deep and sensitive.

Line 151. "Kitchen-knaves." "Knave" is used in the old sense of "boy," or "servant." (See Glossary.)

Line 152. "Across the bar," the buttery bar, over which food and drink were delivered for the dining room.

Line 154. "A twelvemonth and a day." A common expression for a full year.

Line 166. Note the compactness of this line.

Line 169. "Gareth awhile linger'd." Note the hesitating effect of the trochee followed by a period.

Lines 179–183. Note the picturesqueness of the lines, particularly 182.

Line 185. "Camelot." Arthur's capital, and the place where he chiefly holds his court. See "Lancelot and Elaine," note, line 23.

Lines 184–193. Note again in these lines Tennyson's accurate observation of natural phenomena.

Line 187. Camelot was built on a mountain, the "royal mount," or "sacred mount," of Camelot. In one of Tennyson's manuscripts he describes it as the most beautiful in the world, sometimes green and fresh in the beam of the morning, sometimes all one splendor, folded in the golden mists of the West.

Line 200. "Changeling." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 362, note.

Line 202. "Merlin," the famous magician in Arthurian lore —

> "the most famous man of all those times,
> Merlin, who knew the range of all their arts,
> Had built the King his havens, ships and halls,
> Was also Bard, and knew the starry heavens;
> The people called him Wizard."

"Merlin and Vivien," lines 164–168. See also "The Coming of Arthur," lines 279–281.

Lines 203–204. These lines perhaps intimate the allegorical nature of Arthur's city.

Line 207. May allude to the old Eastern legends, which speak of plunging magicians and spirits into certain seas, particularly the Red Sea, to destroy their sorceries.

Line 212. "The Lady of the Lake" probably symbolizes religion, combining as she does the sacred emblems of early Christianity, the Cross, the Sword of Divine Justice, the incense, the fish symbol of Christ, and the living waters. For a description of her see "Lancelot and Elaine," line 1393, note. Compare also "The Coming of Arthur," lines 282–293.

Line 219. "The sacred fish." The fish was adopted by the early Church as the symbol of Christianity, because the Greek word for fish contains the initials of the name and titles of Christ.

Line 221. "Arthur's wars." See "Lancelot and Elaine," line 796.

Line 225. "Those three queens." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 275–278. Malory gives their names. They are emblematic of Faith, Hope, and Charity. They appear in "The Passing of Arthur" to bear Arthur away to the mystic island of Avilion, line 366.

Line 255. Merlin's description of the building of the city is full of allegorical suggestion. To quote from Elsdale's "Studies of the Idylls," "The fairy king and fairy queens who come from a sacred mountain, 'cleft toward the sunrise' (*i.e.* Parnassus), to build the city, are the old mythologies whose birthplace was in the East, the land of the rising sun. From them, besides the religions of the ancient world, are derived poetry, architecture, sculpture; all those elevating and refining arts and sciences which were called into existence mainly and primarily as the expression and embodiment of religious feeling. . . . The city is built to music; for as the harmony and proportion of sound constitute music, so the harmony and proportion of all the various elements and powers which go to make up the man will constitute a fitting shrine for the ideal soul. 'Therefore never built at all'; for the process of assimilating and working up into one harmonious whole all the various external elements is continually going on and unending. 'Therefore built forever'; for since harmonious and proportionate development is the continual law, the city will always be complete and at unity with itself."

Line 257. "Sacred mountain." The poet had in mind, probably, Parnassus, sacred in Grecian lore as the home of Apollo and the Muses.

Line 258. "And built it to the music of their harps." So, according to Greek legend, the walls of Troy and Thebes rose to the sound of music. Cf. "Tithonus," 62–63:—

"Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers."

Line 260. "For there is nothing in it," etc., has an allegorical significance. Arthur is the ideal towards which Gareth is striving. The idea is that the ideal alone remains amid all the changes of material things.

Line 280. "The Riddling of the Bards." The ancient Cymric bards, or poets, wrote in rhyming stanzas of three lines, or triplets, a specimen of which we have in Merlin's own "riddling triplets" in "The Coming of Arthur," lines 402–410.

These bards were supposed to have the gift of prophecy, but their utterances were usually ambiguous, and would thus be fulfilled, whatever happened.

The two following lines appear to illustrate the mysterious character of these rhymes, by stringing together words without any real meaning.

Line 288. "Unmockingly the mocker." Note the contrast.

Line 298. "Who did their days in stone," *i.e.* recorded their deeds on stone.

Lines 306–309. A picture of the ideal life in Camelot. Note the vividness and picturesqueness of this whole description of Camelot.

Line 314. "Delivering doom." Administering justice. *Doom* originally meant a statute or ordinance, hence judgment. Cf. "doom" in line 317, which means condemn.

Lines 320–326. Compare this picture with that presented in the "Passing of Arthur," when sin has made its influence felt.

Line 327. "Uther," called Pendragon. See "The Coming of Arthur," line 14, note.

Line 359. "Sir Kay." Kay is the son of Anton, who under Merlin's direction brought up Arthur. Kay was brought up as Arthur's brother, and on the request of Anton, Arthur made him seneschal of all his lands. He became a knight of the Round Table and steward of Arthur's household. He is always represented as irritable and discourteous.

Line 367. "Aurelius Emrys." See "The Coming of Arthur," line 13, note.

Line 376. "Mark." Malory speaks of him as "a king of Cornwall," and at first a friend of Arthur. In the Idylls he is the enemy of Arthur, cowardly, mean, and treacherous.

Line 380. "Charlock," the wild mustard, which bears a yellow flower.

Line 386. "Cousin Tristram." Sir Tristram of Lyonesse was the nephew of Mark. "Cousin" is used in its old sense of "kinsman."

Line 405. "Blazon'd." The heraldic colors were painted on them in addition to the carving.

Lines 423–424. Note the well-rounded, compact description of Mark's character.

Line 431. From this point Tennyson follows the story given in the 7th book of the "Morte d'Arthur" of Malory.

Line 444. "Wan-sallow," one of the many expressive compounds coined by Tennyson. Both parts of the compound mean "pale."

The simile refers to a plant which becomes diseased by a parasitic growth.

Line 446. "This fellow hath broken," etc. Cf. Malory, "Upon pain of my life he was fostered up in some abbey, and, howsoever it was, there failed meat and drink, and so hither he has come for his sustenance."

Line 454. "A fluent hair." "Fluent" means flowing, and is usually applied to language. Tennyson by a bold figure applies it to the hair.

Line 465. "Sir Fair-hands." Cf. Malory, "Since he hath no name I shall give him a name that shall be Beaumains, that is, Fair-hands."

Line 483. "How the king had saved his life," etc. Cf. "The Coming of Arthur," line 130 :—

"For each had warded either in the fight."

Line 486. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 311–313.

Line 490. "Cær-Eryri's highest." Snowdon, a mountain in Wales. The reference is to another legend concerning Arthur's birth.

Line 492. "The Isle Avilion." See "The Passing of Arthur," line 427, note.

Line 503. "Charm'd." Note the rhythmic effect of the monosyllable with a stop after it, expressing the silence of the hearers before it was suddenly disturbed.

Line 507. Malory says, "And were there any masteries done, thereat would he be, and there might none cast bar or stone to him by two yards."

Line 513. "Spring" = split or crack, its original sense.

Line 519. "Between the in-crescent and de-crescent moon," *i.e.* "at full-moon."

Line 528. "From Satan's foot to Peter's knee," *i.e.* to the very

gate of heaven. The meaning is from Sir Kay's tyranny to King Arthur's favor.

Line 539. Original with Tennyson. In "Morte d'Arthur" Bellicent does not do this.

Lines 541–544. These vows are described at length in "Guinevere," lines 464–474: —

> "To reverence the King, as if he were
> Their conscience, and their conscience as their king,
> To break the heathen and uphold the Christ,
> To ride abroad redressing human wrongs,
> To speak no slander, no nor listen to it,
> To honour his own word as if his God's,
> To lead sweet lives in purest chastity,
> To love one maiden only, cleave to her,
> And worship her by years of noble deeds,
> Until they won her."

Line 549. "Mellow," metaphorically "sweet-tempered."

Line 559. "And the deed's sake," etc. This idea is always emphasized by Arthur.

Line 571. "The lions on thy shield." The heraldic device of Lancelot was azure lions rampant crowned with gold. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 658–660.

Line 575. "May-blossom, and a cheek of apple-blossom." May-blossom is white; cf. "The Miller's Daughter," line 130: —

> "The lanes, you know, were white with may."

The poet probably has in mind the white hawthorn.

"Apple-blossom" is white tinged with pink or red..

Lines 580–582. These lines seem to reflect the state of England in Stephen's reign, when the lord of every castle was a petty king or tyrant, administering law in royal fashion to his subjects.

Line 586. "From that best blood." The wine used in the sacrament, symbolizing the blood of Christ.

Lines 593–602. These lines have an allegorical significance according to Elsdale. See introduction to "Gareth and Lynette."

Line 595. Note the touch of self-conceit, which seems to be characteristic of Lynette.

Line 596. "Castle Perilous" is a favorite name for castles in the old romances.

Line 637. "Brought down a momentary brow," *i.e.* frowned for a moment.

Line 651. "That gave upon," a Gallicism. Cf. "The Princess," lines 226, 227: —

> "into rooms which gave
> Upon a pillar'd porch."

Line 657. "Counter to the hearth," *i.e.* opposite to the hearth.

Line 665. "A maiden shield," *i.e.* a shield with no arms on it such as an unproved knight would bear.

Lines 671–673. The comparison here is to an insect, perhaps the dragon fly, which spreads its "dull-coated" wings, and shows beneath bright colors.

Line 677. "Storm-strengthen'd on a windy site," *i.e.* of wood toughened by battling with the wind.

Lines 686–690. Note the compactness of these lines.

Line 693. "The King hath passed his time," *i.e.* hath lapsed into his dotage.

Line 695. Note the play on words by using "fire" in both the literal and figurative sense.

Line 696. Has the whole order of things been reversed? Note the poetic way of raising the question.

Line 703. "Peacock'd," *i.e.* made conceited. Note the significance and aptness of the expression.

Line 721. "Lackt," *i.e.* left out of account, or absent. Cf. Shakespeare, "Coriolanus," IV. 1, 15: —

> "I shall be loved when I am lacked."

Line 726. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur": "So when he was armed there was none but few so goodly a man as he was."

Line 729. "A foul-flesh'd agaric in the holt," a decayed fungus in the wood. Observe the exactness of the simile in the following line.

Line 739. "Have at thee then," *i.e.* have a care of yourself, a frequent form of warning of instant attack.

Lines 746–756. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur": —

> "What doest thou here? Thou stinkest all of the kitchen, thy clothes be foul of the grease and tallow that thou gainedst in King Arthur's kitchen; weenest thou, said she, that I allow thee for yonder knight that thou killedst? Nay truly, for thou

> slewest him unhappily and cowardly, therefore turn again, foul kitchen page. I know thee well, for Sir Kay named thee Beaumains; what art thou but a lubber and a turner of spits, and a ladle worker? Damsel, said Beaumains, say to me what ye will, I will not go from you whatsoever you say, for I have undertaken to King Arthur for to achieve your adventure, and so shall I finish it to the end, or I shall die therefore."

Note how closely Tennyson follows the original.

Line 766. "Beknaved," called knave.

Line 771. "That spit of thine," thy sword. Note the contemptuous allusion to Gareth's kitchen experience.

Line 776. "Bowl-shaped." Note the suggestiveness of this epithet. The emphatic position of the word centres the imagination upon the form of the valley.

Line 779. This simile may be too uncommon to appeal to the imagination of the ordinary reader, but it illustrates Tennyson's keen insight into nature.

Line 784. Note the play on the word "bound."

Line 796. "Oilily bubbled up the mere." One of the striking cases of onomatopœia in Tennyson. Note the correspondence of sound and sense. The rhythm adds to the effect.

Line 806. Tennyson alludes here to the scientific phenomenon known as *ignis fatuus*.

Line 807. "Good now." An old exclamation. Cf. "well now."

Line 810. Gareth repeats Arthur's words in line 559, as though they were his motto.

Line 829. An allusion to an old custom of serving up a peacock with his gay plumage. When thus served "all the guests, male and female, took a solemn vow; the knights vowing bravery, and the ladies engaging to be loving and faithful," *i.e.* to their champions. Introduced here by Tennyson, perhaps as a subtle hint to Lynette, of which she seems to be in need.

Line 839. "Frontless," shameless.

Lines 854–855. Note the compactness of these lines.

Line 862. "I but speak for thine avail," *i.e.* for thy advantage.

Line 871. "Lion and stoat have isled together, knave,
In time of flood."

An allusion, says Littledale, to the fact that wild animals under

the influence of terror will often take refuge in the same place and not molest one another.

The stoat is a kind of weasel. It here stands for an insignificant animal, in contrast to the lion.

Line 881. An allusion to the story of Cinderella.

Line 884. "The serpent river," allegorical for the river of Time. Here we have the first allegorical encounter, signifying the temptations of youth.

Line 889. "Lent-lily." The yellow daffodil, so called because it blooms about the time of Lent.

Line 891. Note the effect of "fluttering" in the rhythm.

Line 900. Up to this point the poet has sought to try the temper of Gareth who aspires to knighthood, by bringing out the qualities of manliness, self-control, and patience, those high ideals essential to a true knight of Arthur's table. For this purpose particularly he is made to suffer the frequent taunts of Lynette.

Line 908. "The stone Avanturine." A kind of quartz containing mica.

Line 922. "Far liefer" = I had rather.

Line 923. Note that this is the first time Gareth has appeared to lose his self-control and reproach Lynette for her taunts.

Line 936. Cf. Malory. "Thou liest," said Beaumains, "I am a gentleman born, and of more high lineage than thou."

Line 970. "And then she sang." Lynette's songs are introduced to show her change of feeling towards Gareth. There is a development of sentiment. Lynette begins to feel an admiration for her champion which ripens into love. She is too proud, however, to withdraw her epithets.

Line 980. A covert reference to Gareth's menial service.

Lines 983 *et seq.* Gareth's lack of sentiment in his parable is in striking contrast to Lynette's sentimental song.

Line 996. "Worship." Here used in the sense of "honor."

Line 1002. "Flower." The dandelion. The shield is like a dandelion, enlarged "ten thousand-fold," being yellow and round.

Line 1008. He mistakes Gareth for his brother, because Gareth is bearing Sir Morning Star's shield.

Line 1013. A meaningless, expressionless face.

Line 1015. Note that the temptations of middle life, in contrast to those of youth, which were met in the center of the bridge, are met in mid-stream, where there is no room for lance or tourney-skill.

Line 1028. An allusion to the words of Lynette in line 969.

Line 1037. Lynette interrupts her song with comments on Gareth, indicating her increasing feeling for him.

Line 1048. "The boar hath rosemaries and bay." It was an old custom when serving up a boar's head to garnish it, not with flowers, but with *rosemary* and *bay*. Littledale quotes from Percy's "Reliques": —

> "Where stood a boar's head garnished
> With bays and rosemary.

Line 1060. "Of treble bow," *i.e.* of three arches or spans.

Line 1063. "Deep-dimpled." Note the suggestiveness of this epithet.

Lines 1067–1068. Note the allegorical term of the narrative. "Wrapt in hardened skins," etc. The hardened skins are the evil habits of a lifetime, which become engrafted upon us and a part of us in later life, so hardened and toughened as to blunt our finer senses.

Lines 1085 *et seq.* Note how symbolic of age everything is.

Lines 1090–1120. Note the severity of this contest, and the allegorical significance. Compare this contest with that of Prince Arthur and Maleger in Spenser's "Faery Queene," 2. 11. In that contest Arthur repeatedly overthrows Maleger, who instantly springs up again, but is finally conquered by being cast into a lake after having his life crushed out. Maleger is allegorical for the diseases of lust, while Gareth's opponent represents the evil habits of an ill-spent life.

Lines 1107 *et seq.* Note the change in Lynette's feelings which has been foreshadowed in her previous songs.

Line 1117. "Loud Southwesterns," *i.e.* the violent southwest winds.

Line 1118. "The buoy," the object of "can bring under" understood.

Lines 1135 *et seq.* Lynette now fully recognizes the knightly qualities of Gareth. Cf. "Morte d'Arthur," VII, 11. "Marvel have I, said the damsel, what manner of man ye be, for it may be otherwise but that ye be come of a noble blood, for so foul and shamefully did never woman rule a knight as I have done you, and ever courteously ye have suffered me, and that came never but of a gentle blood."

Line 1155. "Hern" = heron. Note again in this and the two lines following Tennyson's habit of close observation.

Line 1168. This line sums up the meaning of the allegory contained in this idyll.

Line 1172. "The vexillary," a term applied to Roman soldiers

detached from their legion and serving under a separate standard. The allusion here is to an inscription upon a cliff above the river Gelt in Cumberland, carved by a Roman soldier, presumably about 207 A.D. It illustrates Tennyson's characteristic of drawing his similes from personal experience and observation.

Line 1174. "Phosphorus," etc. These words mean *Morning Star*, *Midday*, *Evening Star*, *Night*, and *Death*.

Line 1184. "Error," in apposition with "what" in the preceding line. "Error" is used in its literal sense of *wandering*. For an explanation of this line, see lines 764–767.

Line 1186. "His blue shield-lions." See line 571, and note.

Line 1189. Lancelot mistakes Gareth for Sir Morning Star, whose shield Gareth bears.

Lines 1203–1204. Gareth here quotes with a touch of sarcasm, the words Lynette used in lines 748, 972, 1033, to account for his victories.

Line 1230. "Victor from vanquish'd issues at the last." We conquer by being conquered, *i.e.* we learn from experience.

Lines 1236–1239. Lancelot's conception of what makes a man worthy to be a knight of Arthur.

Line 1261. "Yon black felon," refers to Night, or Death, the next and last antagonist whom Gareth is to meet.

Line 1281. "Arthur's Harp." By some thought to be the Great Bear. In the "Last Tournament" we find: —

> "Dost thou know the star
> We call the harp of Arthur up in heaven?"

From this it would seem that Tennyson meant by *Arthur's Harp*, a single bright star, perhaps Arcturus.

Lines 1291–1294. Lynette's feelings towards Gareth have completely changed. In these short broken sentences she shows her intense anxiety for her champion.

Line 1318. "Fineness" = "finesse," clever management.

"Instant," urgent.

Line 1330. Standing out in sharp relief against the horizon.

Line 1336. "Came lights and lights," *i.e.* lights appeared here and there.

Line 1348. "Crown'd with fleshless laughter," *i.e.* with a grinning skull.

Line 1342–1350. Note the periodic sentence.

Line 1386. Cf. "Lancelot and Elaine," line 411.

Lines 1389–1390. Note the force of the allegory in these lines.

The horrors that surround death are only the outward horrors with which he surrounds himself. Death is but a passing to a new and brighter life.

Line 1391. "And Gareth won the quest." This clause marks the climax. Note that throughout the narrative there have been two opposing forces, the ambition and enthusiasm of youth on one side, and the various obstacles that beset it on the other. Gareth, the embodiment of youthful courage, triumphs over all, even death.

Line 1392. Malory.

Line 1394. Tennyson.

NOTES.

LANCELOT AND ELAINE.

Line 1. As in a former Idyll, "Geraint and Enid," the poem opens at a central point. Elaine already has the shield of Lancelot in her charge. At line 28 the poet takes us back, telling by episode the circumstances leading up to this point.

Line 2. "Elaine, the lily maid of Astolat," called in the Romances Elaine le Blank (*blanche, white*). Compare Malory's account, "Morte Darthur," Book XVIII., Chaps. VIII.–XX.

Astolat, according to Malory, is now Gilford, or Guildford, in Surrey, thirty miles southwest of London. Tennyson's Astolat is probably an imaginary place, which, from line 1147, would seem to be on the Thames, below London.

Lines 7–9. It was doubtless a favorite occupation of many a damsel to make and embroider a cover for the shield of her favorite warrior.

Line 10. "Of her wit." Elaine embroidered on the case all the figures on the shield, and then added a border of her own fancy.

Line 12. "Yellow-throated." A good illustration of the poet's accurate observation of Nature.

Line 22. "Caerlyle." Carlisle in Cumberland, frequently mentioned as the scene of Arthur's exploits, and, according to some accounts, Arthur's capital.

Line 23. "Caerleon." Caerleon-on-Usk in South Wales, generally considered as Arthur's chief city and capital. One of his twelve great battles was fought here. Compare "Geraint and Enid," lines 145–146:—

> "For Arthur on the Whitsuntide before
> Held court at Caerleon-on-Usk."

"Camelot." Generally supposed to have been a town in southwestern England, and famous as the place where Arthur frequently held court, and where the Round Table met. Tennyson's Camelot is

one of Arthur's chief cities, and, like Astolat, a mystic city, the location of which is left unfixed.

Line 27. "Him." Lancelot. An ambiguous use of the pronoun by the poet.

Line 35. "Lyonnesse." A fabulous district, supposed to have stretched away to the south and west of Cornwall, but now to be covered by the sea.

Line 39. The following episode of the diamonds appears to be a coinage of Tennyson's imagination, as there is no foundation for it in the older legends. It is evidently introduced here for purposes of contrast, of which the poet is so fond. To offset the maiden bower, we have the horror of the haunted glen. Instead of the maiden herself and her love dream, we have the death struggles of the warriors. The whole description forms a clear-cut picture, which the reader may easily grasp.

Line 65. "The heathen." The Saxons with whom Arthur was so much at war.

Line 71. "To snare her royal fancy." Explain the figure.

Lines 75–76. "The place," etc. London.

Line 78. "For she had been sick." Compare Malory, XVIII. 8: "So King Arthur made him ready to depart to these jousts, and would have had the queen with him; but that time she would not she said, for she was sick, and might not ride at that time, . . . and many deemed the queen would not be there because of Sir Launcelot du Lake, for Sir Launcelot would not ride with the king; for he said that he was not whole of the wound the which Sir Mador had given him. Wherefore the king was heavy and passing wroth."

Line 91. "The tale of diamonds," *i.e.* the full number.

Line 94. "Lets me from the saddle," *i.e.* hinders me from, etc. *Let* is from the Old English verb *lettan*, to make late.

Line 97. "To blame," etc. These lines illustrate how closely Tennyson follows Malory. Compare Malory, XVIII. 8: "Sir Launcelot, ye are greatly to blame, thus to hold you behind my lord: what trow ye, what will your enemies and mine say and deem? nought else but see how Sir Launcelot holdeth him ever behind the king and so doth the queen, for that they would be together; and thus will they say, said the queen to Launcelot, have ye no doubt thereof."

Line 106. "The myriad cricket." Compare "Enoch Arden," line 579:—

"The myriad shrieking of wheeling waterfowl."

Compare line 169 below.

Line 111. "Many a bard," etc. Compare "Merlin and Vivien," lines 7–15.

Lines 120–139. These lines portray in a striking manner the character of Tennyson's Guinevere.

Line 130. These vows are described in "Gareth and Lynette," lines 542–544, as vows

> "Of utter hardihood, utter gentleness,
> And, loving, utter faithfulness in love,
> And uttermost obedience to the king."

In the same poem, line 267, Merlin calls them

> "Such vows as is a shame
> A man should not be bound by, yet the which
> No man can keep."

In "The Last Tournament," lines 683–684, Tristram calls the vows

> "Inviolable vows,
> Which flesh and blood perforce would violate."

Line 132. Arthur appears to Guinevere as Maud did to her lover. Compare "Maud," I. 2:—

> "Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,
> Dead perfection, no more."

Guinevere cannot love such dead perfection, for the man who loves her "must have a touch of earth." Had Arthur possessed this he would not have lost her.

Lines 143–144. "Who honors his own word
As if it were his God's."

In "Guinevere," line 470, we have:—

> "To honor his own word as if his God's."

Also in "The Coming of Arthur":—

> "And Arthur said, 'Man's word is God in man.'"

Line 161. "The rarer-foot." More rarely trodden by foot.

Line 163. "Lost in fancy, lost his way." A good example of one

of Tennyson's characteristics, a sort of sound-play, the repetition of a word in a slightly different sense.

Line 169. "Myriad-wrinkled." A Homeric epithet. Tennyson has "myriad-minded," "myriad-rolling," and "myriad-room'd."

Lines 180–181. "And by what name
Livest between the lips?"

A Virgilian expression, meaning "by what name art thou known among men?"

Line 218. "An if" = if. "An" is an old word for "and," used in the sense of "if." When this force of "an" was forgotten, an "if" was placed after it.

Line 233. "Slightly . . . slight." See note on line 163.

Line 235. Compare Lancelot's courtesy with that of Gawain in line 635:—

"Courtesy with a touch of traitor in it."

Lines 236–240. An example of Tennyson's polished art of expression.

Lines 243–257. This description of Lancelot is highly dramatic and noteworthy. The poet presents the noble soul at war within itself, marring his face and marking it ere his time; and ends with the singularly graphic picture, "marr'd as he was, he seem'd the goodliest man," etc., which words seem to be, as Littledale remarks, a reminiscence of Sir Ector's words when Lancelot is dead (Malory, XXI. 13): "Ah, Lancelot!" he said, "thou were head of all the Christian knights; and now, I dare say," said Sir Ector, "thou, Sir Lancelot, there thou liest, that thou were never matched of earthly knight's hand: and thou were the courtliest knight that ever bare shield: . . . and thou were the goodliest person ever came among press of knights: and thou were the meekest man and the gentlest that ever ate in hall among ladies."

Line 263. "As in a smaller time." Does this mean in times previous to King Arthur, or in our own time? (Littledale.)

Line 265. "Kindly . . . kind." Still another instance of sound-play. Compare "In Memoriam," LXVI. 5, 7:—

"The shade by which my life was crost
* * * * * * * *
Has made me kindlier with my kind."

Line 279. "The Pagan yet once more on Badon hill." Alludes to the twelve great battles which Arthur is said to have fought against the Saxons, the twelfth and last being at the hill of Badon. See line 301 below.

Line 287. It is impossible to fix with any certainty the locality of Arthur's battles. The list given by Lancelot is first found in Nennius (ninth century), whom Tennyson follows. Nennius gives the location of these battles as follows: the first at the mouth of the river Gleni; the second, third, fourth, and fifth on a river called by the Britons Duglas, in the region Linius; the sixth on the river Bassas; the seventh in the wood Celidon; the eighth was near Gurnion Castle, where Arthur bore the image of the Holy Virgin upon his shoulders, and through its power put the Saxons to flight; the ninth was at Caer Leon; the tenth was on the banks of the river Trat Treuroit; the eleventh was on the mountain Breguvin; and the twelfth was a most severe contest, when Arthur penetrated to the hill of Badon, and won a great victory. The last is the only one of the twelve battles that is not regarded as mythical.

Line 293. According to Nennius, Arthur bore the image of the Virgin Mary on his shoulders. Geoffrey of Monmouth says that the picture of the Virgin was on Arthur's shield. Tennyson seems to have been thinking of the famous "Russian emerald," said to have been sent originally by Pilate to Tiberius. It is supposed to have the head of Christ carved upon it. But the poet has taken the detail of the head on the cuirass from Spenser's Arthur ("Faery Queene," I. VII. 29):—

"Athwart his breast a bauldrick brave he ware
That shind, like twinkling stars, with stones most pretious rare:
And in the midst thereof one pretious stone
Of wondrous worth, and eke of wondrous might,
Shapt like a Ladie's head, exceeding shone."

Line 295. "That lighten'd as he breathed," *i.e.* gleamed with the rising and falling of his breast.

Line 297. "The wild White Horse." The emblem of the Saxons. Compare "The Holy Grail," line 312, and "Guinevere," line 15.

Line 306. "High on a heap of slain." According to Nennius, in the battle of the hill of Badon Arthur slew by his own hand nine hundred and forty of the enemy, "no one but the Lord affording him assistance."

Line 314. "The fire of God." In "The Coming of Arthur," line 127, Lancelot says to Arthur:—

". . . The fire of God
Descends upon thee in the battlefield:"

meaning a divinely inspired ardor. So in the Bible, fire is used as a physical symbol of the presence of God.

Line 325. "To make him cheer." An expression often used by Malory, meaning, to make him welcome.

Line 328. "That all was nature," *i.e.* all sprang from his real feelings.

Lines 345–354. These lines present a beautiful picture in contrast with a picture equally beautiful in lines 388–396. This is an excellent illustration of Tennyson's pictorial mode of treatment, which seems, in places, almost to dominate over the working out of the story.

Line 356. "Her favor." At tournaments a knight often wore in his helmet some small article of his lady-love, as a token of his regard for her.

Line 357. "She braved a riotous heart in asking for it." A fine figure expressive of the struggle between her love and her maidenly modesty.

Line 396. "So lived in fantasy." The repetition of this phrase from line 27 above recalls us to that point in the story.

Line 406. Littledale compares the fine description of the "green light from the meadows underneath," striking up into the chalky roof of the cave and illuminating it, to Shelley's "Dream of the Unknown."

> "Floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
> Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
> With moonlight beams of their own watery light."

Line 409. "A noise of falling showers." An archaic use of "noise" in the sense of a pleasant sound, frequent in the older poets.

Line 411. "One of those faint Homeric echoes that become fainter in the latter Idylls." — Littledale.

Line 415. "Lancelot of the Lake." See introduction.

Line 422. "Pendragon," literally "dragon's head," meaning "chief war-leader," a title given to Uther, Arthur's reputed father, and from him descending to Arthur.

Lines 448–449. Doubtless a reminiscence of Plato. Socrates in Plato's Apology, IX. remarks: "That man is wisest who knows that in reality he is of no worth at all with respect to wisdom."

Lines 468–498. Tennyson in these lines follows very closely Malory's account of the tilt. See Malory XVIII. 11.

Lines 480–482. Tennyson in 1882 wrote to Mr. S. E. Dawson: "There was a period in my life, when, as an artist, Turner, for

example, takes rough sketches of landscapes, etc., in order to work them eventually into some great picture, so I was in the habit of chronicling, in four or five words or more, whatever might strike me as picturesque in Nature. I never put these down, and many a line has gone away on the north wind, but some remain, *e.g.* in the 'Idylls of the King'! —

". With all
Its stormy crests that smoke against the skies."

Line 489. "Well and worshipfully." Malory, XVIII. 13, says, "And his fellow [Lavaine] did right well and worshipfully," *i.e.* nobly.

Line 502. "Diamond me no diamonds!" A form of emphatic remonstrance. Compare Richard II., II. 3. 87: "Grace me no grace, nor uncle me no uncles." Similar expressions are found also in Dryden's "Wild Gallant," and Scott's "Ivanhoe."

Lines 506–516. Compare Malory, XVIII. 12: "O gentle Knight Sir Lavaine, help me that this truncheon were out of my side, for it sticketh so sore that it nigh slayeth me. O mine own lord, said Sir Lavaine, I would fain do that might please you, but I dread me sore, and I draw out the truncheon, that ye shall be in peril of death. I charge you, said Sir Launcelot, as ye love me draw it out. And therewithal he descended from his horse, and right so did Sir Lavaine, and forthwith Sir Lavaine drew the truncheon out of his side. And he gave a great shriek, and a marvellous grisly groan, and his blood brast out nigh a pint at once, that at last he sank down, and so swooned pale and deadly."

Line 545. "Bring us," *i.e.* bring us news.

Line 548. "To which it made," etc. Littledale calls attention to a similar picture to that of the diamond in the heart of the carven flower in "Maud," I. XIV. 2:—

"Maud's own little oak-room
(Which Maud, like a precious stone
Set in the heart of the carven gloom,
Lights with herself," . . .).

Line 551. The character of Gawain, "with a touch of traitor," as developed in the Idylls, is a creation of Tennyson. In the Romances Gawain is a brave and honorable knight, the friend and counsellor of Arthur.

Line 555. "And Gareth, a good knight." The original edition read, — "And Lamorak, a good knight."

Line 556. "Sir Modred's." In some of the Romances, Modred was the reputed son of the king, and in others, the nephew. He was afterwards a traitor, and was slain by the king. See "The Passing of Arthur."

Line 583. "Our true Arthur." The queen, not Lancelot, had said this. See line 151 above.

Line 592. "So fine a fear." There is a touch of sarcasm in this expression.

Lines 602–610. A striking portrayal of human passion. These lines together with lines 1190–1229 present the strongest exhibition of passion that the poem affords.

Line 620. "It is a line of which Shakespeare might be proud." Brooke.

Line 658. "And when the shield was brought." Compare Malory, XVIII. 14.

Line 661. "That true man." Ironical, but Elaine understands neither his mockery nor his courtly badinage.

Line 672. For the sound-play on the verb "know" compare line 163 above.

Line 681. "With one I may not name," *i.e.* the queen.

Line 686. "Let me leave." The leaving of the diamond with Elaine, and the king's subsequent wrath with Gawain, are incidents introduced into the story by Tennyson. They are not mentioned by Malory.

Line 701. A good illustration of the rapid change of scene so common in the poem.

Line 707. "Deeming our courtesy," etc. In direct contrast to Arthur's dictum, "Obedience is the courtesy due to kings." Thus Gawain angers the king.

Line 715. "For twenty strokes of the blood," *i.e.* for twenty beats of the heart, for fifteen seconds or so.

Line 728. "Marr'd her friend's aim," etc. Thwarted the old gossip's purpose by receiving the intelligence calmly.

Line 735. "Felt the knot," etc. An accurate picture of strong jealousy, sternly repressed.

Lines 769–770. "And sure . . . save a queen's." He expresses audibly what he already fears, that Elaine is attracted by the great Sir Lancelot.

Line 778. A presage of her actual doom.

Line 795. "The strange-statued gate," etc. For a description of the gate see "Gareth and Lynette," lines 209–226.

Line 798. "His own far blood," *i.e.* his distant relatives.

Line 810. "Then she saw him lying," etc. Compare Malory, XVIII. 15: "And when she saw him lie so sick and pale in his bed, she might not speak, but suddenly she fell to the earth down suddenly in a swoon, and there she lay a great while."

Line 829. "What might she mean by that?" It begins to dawn on Lancelot that Elaine loves him.

Line 844. "In either twilight," *i.e.* morning and evening.

Line 851. "Forbore him." Was patient with him.

Line 854. "And never woman," etc. "So this maiden Elaine never went from Sir Lancelot, but watched him day and night, and did such attendance to him that the French book saith there was never woman did more kindlier for man than she." — Malory, XVIII. 15.

Lines 871–872. "His honor rooted in dishonor," etc. Lines often quoted as an example of Tennyson's strength and concentration of style, and mentioned by Bain as an example of Tennyson's love of epigram.

Line 880. "That ghostly grace." The visionary image of the queen.

Line 905. "The victim's flowers before he fall." The allusion is to the flowers which decorate an animal led to sacrifice.

Line 924. "Then suddenly and passionately she spoke." Compare Malory, XVIII. 19.

Stopford Brooke remarks here: "Nor do I know anything in his [Tennyson's] work more tender than her [Elaine's] character, her love, and her fate." In line 624 *et seq.* he says: "She rises to the very verge of innocent maidenliness in passionate love, but she does not go over the verge. And to be on the verge, and not to pass beyond it, is the very peak of innocent girlhood when seized by overmastering love. It was as difficult to represent Elaine as to represent Juliet; and Tennyson has succeeded well where Shakespeare has succeeded beautifully. It is great praise, but it is well deserved."

J. Churton Collins says: "In the poem, Elaine, though fervidly emphatic, is less indelicately importunate (than in the Romance). The struggle between the uncontrollable passion which has made her speak and the maiden modesty which would seal her lips, of which there are no traces in the Romance, is depicted with great skill by the poet."

Lines 936–937. "With such a stupid heart," etc. "The world, in its stupidity, puts an evil interpretation on what it sees and hears."

Line 953. Lancelot's domain was in Brittany.

Lines 959–962. In these lines Tennyson has exquisitely expanded the simple words of Malory, "She fell down in a swoon."

Line 964. "A flash." Referring to Lancelot's phrase, "love's first flash of youth," in line 944.

Lines 976–978. A sample of Tennyson's keen and subtle insight into human nature.

Lines 992–996. "These are lovely lines, which tell of her lonely watch at night" — Brooke.

Line 997. "And in those days she made a little song." "And the song, how simply wrought it is, and yet how subtly — with the subtlety of long passion's interwoven thought! It is almost like a piece out of the 'Sonnets' of Shakespeare, full of his to-and-fro play with words that are thoughts; with the same kind of all-pervading emotion in the lines; the same truth in the situation and the character of the singer; and with Tennyson's deep-seated waters of love — which too rarely come to the surface — welling upwards in it." — Stopford Brooke.

Line 1015. "Hark the Phantom of the house." An allusion to an old superstition that many families were forewarned of approaching death or misfortune by the appearance of a ghostly figure, who went shrieking about the house, and was known as the "Banshee."

Line 1048. "Muse at me," *i.e.* think upon me.

Lines 1080–1081. "Never yet," etc. Ludicrously out of place in the mouth of a child like Elaine.

Line 1092. "The ghostly man." The priest.

Line 1094. In the following scene Tennyson follows Malory very closely. Compare Malory, XVIII. 19. "Now speak we of the fair maiden of Astolat, that made much sorrow night and day, that she never slept, eat, nor drank; . . . So when she had endured a ten days, . . . then she shrived her clean, and received her Creator. . . . And then she called her father Sir Bernard, and her brother Sir Tirre, and heartily she prayed her father that her brother might write a letter like as she did indite it; and so her father granted her. And when the letter was written word by word like as she devised, then she prayed her father that she might be watched until she were dead, — and while my body is hot, let this letter be put in my right hand, . . . and let me be put in a fair bed, and all my richest clothes be laid with me in a chariot unto the next place where Thames is, and there let me be put within a barget, and but one man with me, such as ye trust to steer me thither, and that my barget be

covered with black samite, over and over. . . . So her father granted it her faithfully, all things should be done like as she had devised. Then her father and brother made great dole, for, when this was done, anon she died. And so when she was dead, the corpse, and the bed, all was led the next day unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all, were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster, and there he rowed a great while to and fro or any espied it."

Line 1129. "So that day there was dole in Astolat." Note the poet's brief way of expressing the family grief. "No elaborate description could portray their grief so strikingly as these few monosyllables." — Rowe.

Line 1130. "But when the next sun," etc. Compare line 411 above.

Line 1141. "Set in her hand a lily." The introduction of the lily is a fancy of Tennyson. Of what is it symbolic? Does the idea of the lily strike the reader as a bit of affectation on the part of the poet, or as artistic? See note on line 1148.

Line 1148. "In her right hand the lily." Mr. Churton Collins thinks that Tennyson had in mind Byron's description of Medora (Corsair, III. 190): —

> "In life itself she was so still and fair
> That death with gentle aspect wither'd there;
> And the cold flowers her colder hands contain'd,
> In that last gasp as tenderly were strain'd,
> As if she scarcely felt, but feigned a sleep,
> And made it almost mockery yet to weep,
> . . . her lips
> . . . seem as they forbore to smile;
> But the white shroud and each extended tress
> Long-fair," etc.

The opinion of Mr. Collins seems hardly warranted, but it is interesting to compare the portrayal of similar scenes by Byron and Tennyson. Both are beautiful; but nothing can surpass the tenderness and pathos with which Tennyson has expressed himself.

Line 1158. "Hard-won and hardly won." See line 163, note.

Line 1160. "Nine-years-fought-for." An illustration of Tennyson's fondness for coining compounds for the occasion. Such compounds abound in Tennyson's poems, and constitute a considerable

feature in his style, even at times destroying the smoothness and rhythm of the verse.

Line 1170. Note that the oriel scene which follows may be considered *the* characteristic scene of the whole poem. It embodies the central idea and meaning of the Idyll with reference to the general story, and its place therein. It is likewise an instance of artistic contrast in which the Idylls abound. "The picture presents contrasted aspects, active and passive, according as we look at the oriel above, or the barge with its sad burden below. Above we see the fallen Guinevere, the sinful agent, in the vehement action and life of unhallowed passion; — below spotless Elaine, the sinless sufferer, in the calm repose and death of sacred affection."— Elsdale.

Line 1170. "Summer side." Southern side.

Line 1178. "Tawnier than her cygnets." The down of a cygnet, or young swan, is of dusky shade. The comparison shows the rare whiteness of the queen's neck.

Lines 1190–1229. See lines 602–609 above. Guinevere's emotion, as it is gradually developed in these lines, presents one of the two exhibitions in the poem of human passion at its highest.

Line 1223. This sudden outburst of wrath is in fine contrast to the cool self-possession hitherto marked by the queen's words. The *woman's* heart speaks here. Note the dramatic effect.

Line 1256. "The meek Sir Percivale." Compare "The Holy Grail," line 3. "Whom Arthur and his knighthood called The Pure." In "Merlin and Vivien" he is described as "The saintly youth, the spotless lamb of Christ."

Line 1257. "And pure Sir Galahad." Galahad, "the maiden knight," was considered the type of saint-like purity. He is always clad in white armor. He was the only knight who achieved the quest of the Holy Grail.

Lines 1264–1274. "Most noble lord," etc. Compare Malory, XVIII. 20: "And this was the intent of the letter: — Most noble knight, Sir Launcelot, now hath death made us two at debate for your love; I was your lover, that men called the fair maiden of Astolat; therefore unto all ladies I make my moan; yet pray for my soul, and bury me at the least, and offer ye my mass-penny. This is my last request. And a clean maiden I died, I take God to witness. Pray for my soul, Sir Launcelot, as thou art peerless. — This was all the substance of the letter." Note that the letter in the poem is more tender and pathetic than that of Malory.

Line 1316. "To thy worship." To thy honor. Tennyson uses Malory's exact words; likewise *worshipfully*, line 1318.

Line 1319. "That shrine." Westminster Abbey, or the ancient church on the same site. Compare Malory, XVIII. 20: "And so when she was dead, the corpse and the bed, all was led the next day unto Thames, and there a man, and the corpse, and all were put into Thames, and so the man steered the barget unto Westminster."

Line 1327. "Half-forgotten kings." Is there an anachronism here?

Line 1354. "Seeing the homeless trouble in thine eyes," *i.e.* seeing the look of sad loneliness, etc. The 1859 edition has, "For the wild people say wild things of thee," instead of this line.

Line 1368. "Him," *i.e.* love.

Lines 1369–1370. Tennyson held an exalted idea of love. His conception is always animated with a spirit of reverence. This conception of the passion of Love is nowhere better expressed than in these two epigrammatic lines.

Line 1371. "After heaven." Next to our hopes of heaven.

Line 1376. The ensuing soliloquy of Lancelot is a genuine touch of Tennyson's poetic feeling. It is one of the finest passages in the poem.

Line 1390. "Waxes . . . wanes." Note the contrast and sound-play of these two words.

Line 1393. The 1859 edition reads:—

> "Lancelot, whom the Lady of the Lake,
> Stole from his mother, so the story runs—
> She chanted snatches of mysterious song."

Malory makes no mention of this incident.

"The Lady of the Lake." In the Romances there are widely different accounts of the Lady of the Lake. Malory gives four different views of her. One Lady of the Lake sends Arthur the sword Excalibur, and asks for Balin's head in return; another Lady of the Lake confines Merlin in a stone prison; a third, "one of the damosels of the lake, called Nymue," shuts Merlin "in a roche," and busies herself about Arthur's safety; a fourth helps Lancelot. In the Idylls Tennyson gives the Lady of the Lake a spiritual and mysterious character.

Line 1415. "That forgotten mere." Lancelot has implied in line 1410 that the place of the mysterious lake from which he gets his name is no longer known.

Line 1418. "Not knowing he should die a holy man." Malory, XXI. 9, 10, tells how at last Guinevere became a nun, and how Lancelot devoted himself to a life of penance and prayer in a hermitage, where he died from grief at hearing of the death of Guinevere.

NOTES.

THE PASSING OF ARTHUR.

Lines 1–5. These introductory lines serve as a sort of second and explanatory title.

Line 1. "The bold Sir Bedivere," a stereotyped epithet often applied to Sir Bedivere after the model of Homer. Compare Homer's "swift-footed Achilles." It is one of the means adopted by the poet to give the poem an archaic flavor.

Line 2. Compare "The Coming of Arthur," lines 175–176:—

> "Then Bedivere, the first of all his knights,
> Knighted by Arthur at his crowning ——"

Compare also "Malory," XXI. 4. At the end of the last great battle, Bedivere is left the sole survivor of all Arthur's knights.

Lines 9–28. These lines are not in the 1869 edition. They are an afterthought of the poet, suggested, perhaps, by the doubt and uncertainty of the times. They are the outburst of a noble soul harassed with doubt and fear for the outcome of things.

"I remember," says Stopford Brooke, "the years in which these lines were written, and the temper of society, and they describe that temper with a great imagination. It was a time when every belief was challenged, when society had almost ceased to hope or believe in the future even of man on the earth, and when political and social ideas which prophesied the advent of a more unselfish world were laughed at as unpractical."

Do these lines contribute to the effect of the poem? Do they aid our conception of the allegory? Is their simplicity of diction significant?

Lines 25–26. ". . . and all my realm reels back into the beast." Compare "The Coming of Arthur," lines 10–12:

"And so there grew great tracts of wilderness,
Wherein the beast was ever more and more,
But man was less and less, till Arthur came."

Compare also "The Last Tournament," lines 122–125: —

"Or whence the fear lest this my realm, uprear'd,
By noble deeds at one with noble vows,
From flat confusion and brute violences,
Reel back into the beast, and be no more?"

Line 28. "I pass but shall not die." Even in his despair Arthur has faith in the prophecy of Merlin. See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 418–421: —

"And Merlin in our time
Hath spoken also, not in jest, and sworn
Tho' men may wound him, that he will not die,
But pass again to come."

Lines 29–49. These lines illustrate the poet's fondness for prophetic dreams and forecasts of the future. The appearance of such vision, significant of coming evil before a fatal fight, is common in old chronicles. The pupil will recall the appearance of Cæsar's ghost to Brutus before the battle of Philippi.

Ellsdale remarks that there is a sort of retributive justice in making it the ghost of Gawain that has to proclaim the hollowness of that delight which the pleasure-seeking Gawain had all his life followed.

Line 33. "Hollow, hollow all delight!" For the character of Gawain see "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 551–557, and the note on the same.

Line 36. "And I am blown along a wandering wind." Tennyson was an admirer of Dante, and this line was probably suggested by "The Inferno," Canto V., where the punishment of "carnal sinners" is thus described: —

"The stormy blast of hell
With restless fury drives the spirits on
Whirled round and dash'd amain with sore annoy,
When they arrive before the ruinous sweep,
Their shrieks are heard, their lamentations, moans,
And blasphemies 'gainst the good Power in heaven."

Lines 38–40. "Like wild birds . . . and wail their way," etc. Again compare "The Inferno," Canto V.: —

"As cranes,
Chanting their dolorous notes, traverse the sky,
Stretched out in long array, so I beheld
Spirits: who came loud wailing, hurried on
By their dire doom."

Line 41. "Shrill'd." Note the effect of the trochees in the first foot, together with the abrupt break after the first half foot. Is this characteristic of Tennyson?

Line 43. "As of some lonely city," etc. Contrast this simile with that in lines 457–461 below, which describe the jubilant cries welcoming Arthur to the isle of rest.

Line 48. "All that haunts the waste and wild." Compare "Guinevere," lines 127–129:—

"Fled all night long by glimmering waste and weald,
And heard the spirits of the waste and weald
Moan as she fled, or thought she heard them moan."

All creation seems to Arthur to mourn his failure.

Lines 50–64. Contrast the practical, matter-of-fact nature of Sir Bedivere with the highly wrought, imaginative nature of King Arthur. Bedivere does not believe in ghosts or dreams. They are of no significance. Let Gawain go. There is work to be done. Modred and his knights are at hand.

"Arise, go forth and conquer as of old."

Line 59. "Modred." Modred is *the villain* of the Idylls. His character, as developed throughout the poem, is contemptible, treacherous, and malicious. He is frequently mentioned, but never appears in an honorable light. Compare "Guinevere," lines 569–572:—

". . . The man they call
My sister's son — no kin of mine, who leagues
With Lords of the White Horse, heathen and knights,
Traitors . . ."

Line 66. "In the west." According to the romances, when Arthur, hearing of Modred's treachery, returned from his war with Lancelot, Modred retreated toward the west, where he made his last stand.

Lines 67–70. For a list of these wars see "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 283–316. See also the note on the same.

Line 77. "One lying in the dust at Almesbury." Guinevere had taken refuge in the nunnery at Almesbury after her love for Lancelot was disclosed. Arthur, while on his way to meet Modred, came hither for a farewell interview. At his approach the queen was conscience-stricken, and —

"Prone from off her seat she fell
And grovelled with her face against the floor."

Line 78. Meaning of this line?

Line 81. "Lyonnesse." See "Lancelot and Elaine," line 35, note. Malory places the scene of the battle near Salisbury. Geoffrey of Monmouth, in Cornwall, on the river Cambula. Tennyson, in harmony with the mystic realm of Arthur in the Idylls, chooses the mythical land of Lyonnesse for the scene of the battle.

Lines 82–87. These lines form a most fitting introduction to the battle scene which follows. Note their pictorial power. They are an excellent example of Tennyson's power in this direction.

Line 87. "The phantom circle of a moaning sea." A striking figure suggesting the vague, dimly defined outlines of a distant sea-horizon.

Lines 90–91. "When the great light of heaven," etc., *i.e.* December 21, or, approximately, the end of the year. It will be remembered that Tennyson intended the story of the Idylls should run through one complete year. Accordingly, the final catastrophe and death of Arthur occur at the close of the year.

Lines 90–135. The vividness and realism of this fine description of the battle can hardly be surpassed, yet it is evolved for the most part from Malory's simple account: "And never was there seen a dolefuller battle in no Christian land. For there was but rushing and riding, foining and striking, and many a grim word was there spoken either to other, and many a deadly stroke."

While the poet has not obtruded any allegorical significance in his description of the battle, we can hardly fail to recognize in veiled language a description of the whole battle of humanity for life and faith and hope in the midst of its chill misery.

Tennyson would often quote these lines as some of his best work, and would allow that it was a "presentment of human death" as well as the overthrow of the "old order."

Line 95. "A death-white mist," etc. Contrast this dismal picture with the brilliant picture of Arthur's first battle in "The Coming of Arthur," lines 95–99: —

"When Arthur reached a field-of-battle bright
With pitch'd pavilions of his foe, the world
Was all so clear about him, that he saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill
And even in high day the morning star."

Lines 108–117. Note the effect of the rhythm and the words in echoing the sense.

Lines 120–121. Note the effect of the dominant letter *s* in appropriately expressing the flash of the waves.

Lines 129–135. This last picture of the gradual inroad of the sea is finely conceived and powerfully expressed.

Lines 139–141. Mark the allegorical significance here. The "great voice that shakes the world" seems hardly warranted from the gentle and gradual rising of the tide on a flat, sandy shore. It is rather the voice of Time which gradually pulls down and destroys all things. The sea beating on the coast and wearing away the shore is an apt symbol of the effects of Time.

Lines 147–153. The prosaic Sir Bedivere, little inclined to moralize, again takes the practical view of the situation. His loyalty is not in doubt, his practical nature insists on prompt action in the work to be done.

Line 162. "King am I," etc. Noble words and a fitting climax. Aroused by the words of Sir Bedivere, Arthur again rises to the full dignity of his kinghood, and the grand purpose for which he has come.

Line 168. "Excalibur." For a description of this famous weapon see "The Coming of Arthur," lines 294–308.

Line 170. At this point the poem lapses into the original fragment, "Morte d'Arthur," published in 1842. The poet is not over particular to join the old and new without a perceptible break. The old introduction, "So all day long," etc., is retained as a sort of recapitulation of what has gone before, that our attention may be concentrated on the scene that follows.

The remainder of the narrative, although written so many years before the rest of the Idylls, is in the best Tennysonian vein, and serves to rank "The Passing of Arthur" as one of the finest of the Idylls.

Lines 176–180. Note the conciseness yet vividness with which this picture is drawn.

Line 178. "Strait." Note the use of the word here.

Line 180. "A great water." This phrase has often been criticised as affected phraseology. What would be the difference in effect if the poet had used the more definite word "lake" for the vague term "water"?

Line 191. "Tho' Merlin sware," etc. Compare "The Coming of Arthur," lines 150 *et seq.*, also lines 418–423.

Line 199. "Clothed in white samite, mystic, wonderful." An exact repetition of line 284 in "The Coming of Arthur." The line is again repeated in line 312 below.

Line 205. "And fling him far." The personal pronoun "him" is used interchangeably with "it" in referring to Excalibur. The former has a suggestion of affection to Arthur. He regards the sword as a person endowed with life and power.

Lines 207–432. In the following pathetic episode Tennyson follows Malory closely, but here and there lights up the narrative with poetic touches of his own.

Lines 212–215. This vivid picture is expanded from Malory's simple words, "So Sir Bedivere departed."

Lines 224–226. Compare these lines with the simple prose of Malory, "The pommel and the haft were of precious stones."

Line 228. "This way and that dividing the swift mind." This line is almost an exact reproduction of Virgil's line in the "Æneid," IV. 285:—

> "*Atque animum nunc huc celerem nunc dividit illuc.*"
> "And he divides his swift mind now this way, now that."

The line is expressive of his indecision.

Lines 230–232. Malory says, "And then Sir Bedivere hid Excalibur under a tree." Note Tennyson's minute study of outward nature, and reproduction of detail.

Lines 238–240.

> "I heard the ripple washing in the reeds,
> And the wild water lapping on the crag."

One of the finest examples of onomatopœic effect in the English language.

"These two phrases mark exactly the difference of sound produced by water swelling up against a permeable or impermeable barrier."

—Brimley.

Line 251. "Across the ridge." This phrase was inserted in "Morte d'Arthur," in 1853.

Lines 266–268. "What record," etc. These words show that Sir Bedivere fails to recognize the scope of Arthur's purpose and life-work.

Line 272. "Wrought by the lonely Maiden of the Lake." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 282–293. For a further account see Malory I. 23.

Line 280. Almost a repetition of line 233. The frequent repetition of single lines is an echo of Homer.

Line 290. "Laid widow'd," helplessly bereft. Tennyson uses the metaphorical word widow'd several times in his poetry. "My widow'd race" and "my heart, though widow'd," in "In Memoriam," likewise "widow'd channel" in "Queen Mary."

Line 300. "I will arise and slay thee with my hands." Forman remarks that this line is "one of the master touches of a masterly poem." Such a passionate outburst is quite unusual to the character of Arthur as depicted by Tennyson. It is a touch of humanity.

Lines 301–310. "In this description of Sir Bedivere's last and successful attempt to throw the sword into the lake every word tells of rapid, agitated, determined action, refusing to dally with temptation that had twice overcome him." — Brimley.

Of lines 307–310 the same author remarks: "An inferior artist would have shouted through a page, and emptied a whole pallet of color, without any result but interrupting his narrative, where Tennyson in three lines strikingly illustrates the fact he has to tell, — associates it with one of nature's grandest phenomena, and give a complete picture of this phenomenon."

Line 307. "A streamer of the northern morn," *i.e.* the Aurora Borealis, or northern light.

Line 308. "Moving isles of winter," floating icebergs.

Lines 335–336. "Half rose, slowly, with pain," etc. Note the effect of the metre in depicting the effort of the wounded king to rise.

Lines 350–351. Note the realism in these lines. Compare also "Guinevere," lines 597–599: —

> "The money vapor rolling round the King,
> Who seemed the phantom of a giant in it,
> Enwound him fold by fold, and made him gray."

Lines 354–360. Another excellent example of onomatopœa.

"As clear as a piece of ringing, smiting, clashing sound as any to be found in Tennyson. . . . We hear all the changes on the vowel *a* — every sound of it used to give the impression — and then, in a

moment, the verse runs into breadth, smoothness, and vastness: for Sir Bedivere comes to the shore, and sees the great water:—

> "'And on a sudden, lo, the level lake,
> And the long glories of the winter moon,'

in which the vowel *o* in its changes is used as the vowel *a* has been used above."—Brooke.

Line 356. "The bare black cliff clang'd round him," etc. Observe the effect of alliteration and the successive, accented monosyllables.

Line 361. Malory's account is as follows: "And when they were at the water-side, even fast by the bank hoved a little barge with many fair ladies in it, and among them all was a queen, and they all had black hoods, and all they wept and shrieked when they saw King Arthur. 'Now put me into the barge,' said the king; and so they did softly, and there received him three queens with great mourning, and so they set him down, and in one of their laps King Arthur laid his head; and then that queen said, 'Ah! dear brother, why have ye tarried so long?'"

"He would be a bold critic who should pronounce that Tennyson has improved this. He would be a still bolder critic who should wish to see a touch or letter of Tennyson's version altered. The truth is that in this case there is no parallel between the poet and the romancist. Each had to tell a story in itself so wondrously beautiful, so touching, so suggestive, so picturesque, that it mattered little how it was narrated, provided only it was narrated with fidelity. . . . Tennyson's elaborate beauties command our admiration. Malory's simple words go straight to the heart. In the one case we dwell upon the eloquence of the speaker; in the other we are lost in the story that he tells."—J. Churton Collins.

Line 366. "Three queens." See "The Coming of Arthur," lines 275–278:—

> "Three fair queens,
> Who stood in silence near his throne, the friends
> Of Arthur, gazing on him, tall, with bright
> Sweet faces, who will help him at his need."

These three queens in the allegory probably typify the three Christian virtues, Faith, Hope, and Charity.

Line 367. "A cry that shiver'd to the tingling stars." The cry is from "a company of spirits amid mountains whose natural power of echo is heightened by the silence of the night, the clearness of the

winter air, and the hardening effects of a frosty, wintry night. Such a cry, at such a time, and in such a place, would thrill from rock to rock, from summit to summit, till it seemed to pierce the sky in a hustling storm of multitudinous arrow sounds." — Brimley.

Lines 369–371. "Like a wind . . . of the world." Observe how vividly the simile expresses the idea of utter loneliness and mournfulness.

Line 381. "Like the wither'd moon," *i.e.* like the moon fading before the rising sun.

Line 383. "Dash'd with drops of onset," *i.e.* dashed with drops of blood from the assault.

For "onset" see glossary.

Lines 389–393. This beautiful passage, contrasting Arthur in his hour of darkness with Arthur in his hour of glory, and making his prowess in the lists typical of the latter, is hardly in keeping with Lancelot's description of Arthur in "Lancelot and Elaine," lines 283–316. In the latter passage it is as a warrior, and not as a tilter, that Arthur is pictured in his greatness.

Line 396. "My forehead and my eyes." The use of specific organs for the general term, face, is Homeric.

Line 401. "The holy Elders with the gift of myrrh." See Matthew ii. 11. Arthur is compared to the star of the East which appeared to the wise men, and led them to Bethlehem.

Line 403. "An image of the mighty world." The old belief was that the world was round and flat. Malory has the following concerning the Round Table: "Also Merlin made the Round Table in tokening of the roundness of the world, for by the Round Table is the world signified by right. For all the world, Christian and heathen, repair unto the Round Table, and when they are chosen to be of the fellowship of the Round Table, they think them more blessed and more in worship than if they had gotten half the world."

Lines 405–406. The allegory is apparent here. Humanity sees its ideals shattered, and in the new doctrines is forced to look for others.

Lines 408–423. Tennyson was very fond of reading these lines aloud. In them he strikes his fundamental chord. "He is filled with horror for many of the so-called movements of advance. He is suspicious of the new intellectual, social, and political efforts that characterized his age. Men's souls were shaken by the warring of the high and holy." — Macallum.

Line 408 is a repetition of line 508 in "The Coming of Arthur."

Line 416. "Pray for my soul." Note the effect of the trochee in the first foot in expressing "entreaty."

Line 423. "Bound by golden chains," etc. The old notion that the earth is attached to heaven by a golden chain is frequently alluded to in English literature. Jeremy Taylor writes, "Faith is the golden chain to link the penitent sinner to God." Archbishop Hare says, "This is the golden chain of love, whereby the whole creation is bound to the throne of the Creator." Compare also Milton, "Paradise Lost, II. 1051:—

"Hanging in a golden chain
This pendant world."

Many other allusions might be cited.

Line 427. "To the island-valley of Avilion." Avilion, or Avalon, is supposed to have been the name of a valley in the neighborhood of Glastonbury, where Joseph of Arimathea is said to have first landed with the Holy Grail. It is called an island, because nearly surrounded by the winding of a river. Some romances make it an ocean island, the abode of Arthur. In the Celtic myths it is an island where the wounded are healed and the old made young. In Tennyson it is a mystical place like the other localities in the Idylls.

Line 428. This description of Avilion was suggested, perhaps, by Homer's account of Elysium in the "Odyssey," IV. 566, and VI. 42.

Line 435. "That, fluting a wild carol ere her death." There was a long-standing tradition that the swan just previous to death sings a sweet song. The tradition has no foundation of fact. Compare Tennyson's "The Dying Swan," Stanza III.

Line 437. "With swarthy webs," *i.e.* with her swarthy, webbed feet.

Line 440. The original fragment ends here. The twenty-nine lines added later continue the mystical story. "The passing soul, having fought a good fight, having finished its course, having kept the faith, is received beyond the limit of the world." — Littledale.

Line 445. "From the great deep," etc. This "weird rhyme" is a repetition of Merlin's "riddling triplets" in line 410 of "The Coming of Arthur." According to an ancient belief, "Animated beings have three states of Existence, that of Inchoation in the Great Deep, or lowest point of Existence; that of Liberty in the State of Humanity; and that of Love, which is happiness in Heaven." Read Tennyson's "De Profundis: The Two Greetings," *i.e.* birth and death.

"Out of the deep, my child, out of the deep,
* * * * * * *
To that last deep where we and thou are still."

Line 460. Contrast these sounds of welcome with the dim cries of despair in lines 41–45, and of lamentation in lines 368–369 above.

Line 469. The cycle of the mystic year is now complete from Arthur's birth. It is the last night of the old year as Arthur passes away, and the sun rises bringing in a new year. The poem closes with a line of hope worthy of the noble character that Tennyson has depicted.

GLOSSARY.

CONTAINING OBSOLETE WORDS, AND WORDS USED IN AN UNUSUAL SENSE IN THE FOREGOING IDYLLS.

ABBREVIATIONS:

C. A.	Coming of Arthur.	M. E.	Middle English.
G. L.	Gareth and Lynette.	M. L.	Middle Latin.
L. E.	Lancelot and Elaine.	A. S.	Anglo-Saxon.
P. A.	Passing of Arthur.	G.	German.
O. F.	Old French.	It.	Italian.
O. E.	Old English.		

Affiance. L. E. 1346. Trust, confidence. Used in this sense by Shakespeare. Its more common meaning is betrothal or marriage. M. E. *affiance*, *afiance*. O. F. *afiance*, from *affier*, to trust in.

Allowed of. L. E. 110. Approved by. This *allow* is from the French *allouer*, to approve; from the Latin *ad*, to, and *laudare*, to praise. It must not be confused with "allow" in the sense of "permit." See L. E. 152 and 201.

Anon. L. E. 342. Soon afterward; literally, in one instant. M. E. *anon;* originally a prepositional phrase, *on ān*, *i.e.* in one.

Armlet. L. E. 1219. A little arm, hence an ornament for the arm; a metal band or ring worn on the upper arm. From *arm* and the diminutive suffix *let*.

Barren-beaten. L. E. 160. Made barren by being trodden. One of the many compounds formed and used by Tennyson as epithets.

Battle-writhen. L. E. 807. Twisted by wielding sword and spear in battle. Another Tennyson compound. *writhen* is an obsolete participle from *writhe*. M. E. *writhen*, to twist.

Belike. G. L. 1312. L. E. 214. Probably in early modern English also written *belyke* or *bylyke;* apparently of dialect origin, *be*, by, prep., and *like*, likely, *i.e.* by what is likely.

Black-stoled. P. A. 365. Black-robed. The *stole* was a long, loose robe. M. E. *stole*. Latin *stola*, a robe.

Blank. L. E. 193. Bare, *i.e.* without coat of arms or other device. M. E. *blank*, fem. *blanche*. French *blanc*, fem. *blanche*, white.

Blare. L. E. 938. To trumpet forth. Compare *blaze*, to proclaim, both words being from the same root as *blow*.

Blazoned. G. L. 398. L. E. 9. A heraldic term applied to the devices portrayed on the shield or armor. French *blasonner*.

Boon. G. L. 327. M. E. *boon*, *bone*, and *boyn*. A. S. *ben* and *bene*. A prayer; thence that which is granted in answer to prayer, a "favor" or "privilege."

Braided. L. E. 8. Embroidered. But *braid* and *broider* are from different roots and have different meanings. *Braid* is from a Teutonic base, *bragd*, meaning to swing, hence to entwine, weave. A. S. *bregdan*. M. E. *braiden*. *Broider* is from the French *broder*, or *border*, and meant originally "to work on the edge," hence, to ornament with needlework.

Brake. L. E. 1130. An obsolete form of *broke*.

Brewis. G. L. 447. Broth, from *brew*, meaning "boil." M. E. *brewes*. O. F. *broues*.

Broach. G. L. 476. Spit. F. *broche*, "a pointed stick," originally the same word as *brooch*.

Burns. G. L. 90. A rivulet, a brook, also written *bourn* or *bourne*. M. E. *burne*. A. S. *burna*. The word is frequently used in the north of England and in Scotland.

Burthen. L. E. 898. A refrain of a song repeated after each stanza. *Burthen* is more properly spelt *burden*, from the French *bourdon*, the drone of a humming bee. M. E. *burdoun*. This word must not be confused with *burthen*, a load.

Caitiff. G. L. 799. Originally "captive," hence, "worthless," "bad," "cowardly." M. E. *caitif*. O. F. *caitif*.

Casque. G. L. 665. P. A. 377. A helmet. French *casque*, a helmet.

Catapult. G. L. 941. An engine for throwing stones, used by the Romans. L. *catapulta*.

Cate. G. L. 828. Generally used in plural form meaning provisions, connected with *cater*, to provide. More frequently a "delicacy" or a "dainty," as here.

Chancel. P. A. 177. The enclosed space in a church surrounding the altar, formerly separated from the rest of the church by a screen or lattice-work, hence the name from the Latin *cancelli*, lattice-work. M. E. *chauncel*. O. F. *chancel*.

Churl. G. L. 419. From A. S. *ceorl*, "a man," a "freeman of the lowest rank," hence, a "low, ill-bred fellow."

Clomb. G. L. 56. P. A. 446. An obsolete form of *climbed*.

Comb. G. L. 1163. A bowl-shaped hollow in a hillside, a Celtic word occurring frequently in local names of Wales and the West of England.

Couched. L. E. 177; *i.e.* placed the spear under the right armpit in position for attack, with the butt end in the *rest* or socket behind the saddle. O. F. *coucher*, Latin *collocare*, to place together.

Crescent. L. E. 446, 1389. Growing. From the Latin *crescen(t)s*, to grow or increase. French *croissant*. M. E. *cressent*.

Cuirass. L. E. 293. Breastplate; from French *cuir;* Latin *corium*, leather, armor for the breast having been originally made of leather.

Cuisses. P. A. 383. Armor for the thighs. Latin *coxa*, thigh; French *cuisse:* also written *cuishes*.

Curvet. L. E. 787. To prance with all four feet off the ground at the same time. French *courbetter*.

Dais-throne. P. A. 386. A throne elevated on the dais or platform. Dais from M. L. *discus*, a table, in early Latin, a plate. O. F. *dais*, a high table. M. E. *deis*.

Devices. L. E. 9. Armorial bearings. Early mod. E. *devise*. M. E. *devise*, *devyse*, *devys*. O. F. *devise*, a division, difference, plan, contrivance. Latin *divisus*. The word *device* literally means a division; hence a disposition or desire; hence, a contrivance, a design.

Devoir. L. E. 118. Literally "duty"; hence, often used of the devotion of a knight for his lady. French *devoir*, to owe. Latin *devere*.

Dint. L. E. 19. Literally a "blow"; hence, as here, an indentation made by a blow. M. E. *dint* or *dynt*, also *dent*, whence the other mod. E. form *dent*, a blow. *Dint* also has the sense of force or power. Compare *by dint of*.

Dipt. L. E. 394. P. A. 311. Went down. Another form of *dipped*, the past tense of *dip*. M. E. *dippen*.

Discaged. G. L. 20. Taken out of a cage. Observe the difference between "discaged" and "uncaged."

Dole. L. E. 1129. Grief. M. E. *dol*. O. F. *dol*. Latin *dolor*.

Downs. L. E. 162. A rolling country, somewhat elevated, not covered by forests. The term is particularly applied to certain

districts in southern and southeastern England. M. E. *down* or *dun*. A. S. *dun*, a hill.

Dragon-boughts. G. L. 229. The coils of dragons' tails. *Bought* or *bout* means "bend" or "turn."

Enow. G. L. 205. L. E. 683. Enough; originally a plural form of the indefinite pronoun, "enough"; but Tennyson uses the word without distinction of number for "enough," pronoun and adverb.

Fain. L. E. 767. Glad, from an old Teutonic base, *fag*, to fit, or to suit. The word originally meant "fixed"; hence, "suited," "satisfied," "content." Early mod. E. *fayne*. M. E. *fain*, or *fayn*. A. S. *fagan*. It is now used to imply the acceptance of an alternative to something better.

Fantastical. L. E. 591. Whimsical, full of romantic fancies. *Fantastic* + *al*. O. F. *fantastique*. Mod. F. *fantastique*.

Fantasy. G. L. 618. L. E. 11. A fanciful design; an older form of *fancy*, a whim; hence, a product of fancy.

Fealty. G. L. 391. P. A. 243. A doublet of "*fidelity*." O. F. *fealte*. Latin *fidelitas*, faithfulness.

Glamour. G. L. 202, 205. P. A. 52. Enchantment; hence, charm, fascination. Also *glamor*, or more correctly, *glamer;* probably from the same root as *gleam*.

Greaves. P. A. 383. Armor for the lower part of the legs. Made of metal, and lined with some soft substance. M. E. *greves*. O. F. *greves*, shin.

Guerdon. G. L. 810. A reward, or a recompense; from F. *guerdon* or *guerredon*. M. L. *widerdonum*, a gift in return.

Gyve. G. L. 362. Fetter. M. E. *given*, *gyven*, originally a Celtic word.

Haft. P. A. 224. A handle, as of a sword. A. S. *haeft*, a handle. M. E. *haft*.

Hale. G. L. 791. To drag, or to draw. Same as *haul*. F. *haler*. G. *holen*.

Hern. L. E. 653. A contraction of "heron," a kind of bird with long legs, neck, and bill; formerly regarded as a bird of ill omen.

Hest. P. A. 211. A command; from O. E. *haes;* commonly written "behest." The *t* is an added letter, and the vowel is consequently shortened.

Holp. C. A. 141. L. E. 494. Help. *Holp* and *holpen* are antiquated forms.

Hove. P. A. 361. Probably the past tense of "*heave*," but used here by Tennyson as the past tense of *hove*, to wait, or to linger; hence, of a boat, to float.

Jacinth. P. A. 225. The same as *hyacinth*, a precious stone of the color of the hyacinth flower, blue and purple. M. E. *jacint.* O. F. *jacinthe.* Latin *hyacynthus* (from the Greek).

Joust. G. L. 85. L. E. 31. P. A. 270. Another form of "just," a tournament; from Latin *juxta*, near; literally a "meeting together." M. E. *juste;* O. F. *joste;* Mod. F. *joute.*

Joyance. L. E. 1313. Enjoyment; an archaic word used by Spenser and Byron. O. F. *joyance.*

Knave. G. L. 151. Knave is originally "boy" (cf. G. *knabe*), hence, "servant."

Lackt. G. L. 721. From *lack*, "to be wanting."

Lap. P. A. 239. To make a sharp sound as a dog does when licking water with his tongue. Tennyson uses the word here to distinguish between the peculiar sharp sound of the water striking against the rocks, from the soft sound of the water as it plashes among the reeds. The word is of Teutonic origin.

Lichened. L. E. 44. To be covered with lichens, so as to give anything the color of lichens.

Lief. P. A. 248. Beloved, from the same root as "love" and "belief." M. E. *leef*, A. S. *léof.* The word is archaic.

Links. L. E. 165. Windings, as of a river; hence, the ground lying along such windings. The word is a dialect form of *linch.*

Loon. G. L. 751. A stupid fellow, a lubber. O. E. *lowm.*

Lustihood. L. E. 202. Strength and vigor: an archaic word of Teutonic origin. Compare German *lustigkeit.*

Lustrous. P. A. 284. Bright, luminous, chiefly used figuratively, as here. Latin *lustrum.*

Mage. C. A. 280, 362. G. L. 299. A magician, an enchanter. F. *mage.* L. *magus.* It. *mago*, "a magician."

Marches. L. E. 525. Border lands, often the scene of battles, and hence left uncultivated. M. E. *marche.* O. F. *marche*, a border.

Marge. P. A. 232. Same as "*margin*"; border; French *marge.*

Mavis. G. L. 1052. The song-thrush, or "throstle." F. *mauvis*, from an old Celtic word.

Mere. G. L. 778. L. E. 1400. P. A. 205. A lake or pool; formerly A. S. *mere*, a lake, pool. M. E. *mere*. Latin *mare*.

Merle. G. L. 1052. The blackbird. F. *merle*. Latin *merula*.

Meseems. G. L. 832. = *me seems*, *i.e.* "it seems to me." *Me* is the dative case, or indirect object of *seems*.

Nightmare. P. A. 345. A fiend supposed to cause evil dreams, and to oppress people during sleep. M. E. *nightemare*. G. *nachtmahr*. *Mare* is of Teutonic origin.

Oared. L. E. 1147. Rowed. Shakespeare uses the word in "The Tempest," and Tennyson twice in "The Princess." The verb "oor" is from the noun "oar." A. S. *ār*. M. E. *ore*.

Offices. P. A. 293. Services, duty. French *office*. Latin *officium*, duty.

Oriel. L. E. 1170. A projecting window. M. E. *oryel*, *oriol*. O. F. *oriol*. M. L. *oriolum*. Latin *aureolum*, a gilded room; hence, a room forming a projection in the form of a bay window, and richly furnished.

Overdo. L. E. 467. Outdo. The usual meaning of "overdo" is "to do too much." M. E. *overdon*.

Palfrey. G. L. 1325. A riding horse, especially for ladies. F. *palefroi*. M. E. *palfrey*, *palefrey*. Low L. *paraveredus*.

Palled. L. E. 1135. Shrouded; Latin *palla*, a mantle. M. E. *pal*, *palle*. O. F. *palle*.

Pass. L. E. 1084. To die. Frequently used in P. A., in the sense of "disappear," *i.e.* "to depart from life."

Postern-gate. C. A. 212. A back door or gate, a private entrance. *Postern* + *gate*.

Pre-doomed. L. E. 724. To condemn beforehand. *pre* + *doom*.

Pricked. L. E. 477. Spurred; past tense of *prick*. M. E. *pricken*. A. S. *prician*. G. *prickeln*.

Puissance. C. A. 17. Power, strength. O. F. *puissance*.

Quest. G. L. 535. Search. O. F. *queste*. L. *quaesita*, *quaesta*, from *quaero*, to seek.

Quit. L. E. 939. Requite, repay; also "quite." M. E. *quiten*. French, *quitter*. Latin *quietare*, to pay.

Ramp. G. L. 1273. L. E. 660. Ramping; literally "climbing." A heraldic term used of animals in the position of attack. Same root as "romp." M. E. *rampen.* O. F. *ramper*, to climb.

Rapt. L. E. 282. Carried away. From an English verb "rap," to snatch. M. E. *rappen.* G. *raffen.* The word is of Teutonic origin, and is not to be confused with Latin *raptus.*

Rathe. L. E. 338. Early. From an old M. E. adjective *rath*, adverb *rathe*, from which comes our comparative "rather."

Reave. G. L. 411. Strip. Carry off by force. Past tense, *reft.* Early modern E. *reve*, *reeve.* A. S. *reáfian.*

Roundelay. G. L. 496. A poem containing a line which comes around again and again. F. *roudelet.*

Ruth. G. L. 873. Pity, sorrow. M. E. *ruthe.* Derived from A. S.

Sallow-rifted. L. E. 995. Broken by patches of pallid light; a Tennyson compound.

Samite. Used several times in both L. E. and P. A. A rich silk interwoven with gold or silver thread; later, rich silk material of any kind. Tennyson has both white and black samite. Probably derived from the Greek *hexamiton*, six-threaded.

Scaur. L. E. 53. Another form of "scar," a detached rock, a cliff. In connection with "shingly," a sloping cliff covered with pebbles. Of Teutonic origin, not to be confused with "scar," meaning a "mark."

Scullion. G. L. 151. Properly a "dish-clout," from O. F. *escouillon.* Thence a servant who cleans pots and kettles.

Shingly. L. E. 53. Pebbly; *shingle* + *y*, same root as "sing." The coarse gravel is called "shingle," from the singing or crunching noise made by walking on it. Teutonic origin. See **Scaur**, above.

Shrill. L. E. 1019. P. A. 369. To utter a keen, high-pitched sound or cry. M. E. *schrillen.* G. *schrillen.* Of Teutonic origin.

Shrive. L. E. 1093. To grant absolution. From the same root as the Latin *scribere*, to write; hence, to prescribe a penance for sin; hence, to grant absolution. Past tense *shrove* is seen in "Shrove Tuesday." M. E. *shriven.* A. S. *scrifan.*

Simples. L. E. 857. Healing herbs. Each plant was supposed to possess its particular virtue, and therefore to constitute a simple remedy. The word is commonly used in the plural.

Soilure. L. E. 7. The act of soiling or of tarnishing. It was the custom of knights to keep their shields covered to prevent tarnish-

ing. Shakespeare uses the word in "Troilus and Cressida," IV. I. 56: "Not making any scruple of her *soilure.*"

Spate. G. L. 3. A flood or torrent; a term used in Scotland, of Celtic origin.

Squire. L. E. 382. A short form for "esquire," a shield bearer. From Latin *scutum*, a shield. O. F. *escuyer.* Hence, an attendant on a knight.

Strait. P. A. 178. A narrow tongue of land; more usually, a narrow passage of water connecting two bodies of water. Another form of the word "straight." M. E. *strait.* O. F. *estrait*, narrow. Latin *strictus.*

Tale. L. E. 91. The full number, or sum. M. E. *tale*, a number. A. S. *talu*, a number; hence the secondary meaning, orderly arrangement of speech, a story.

Tamper. L. E. 128. Another form of "temper," to meddle with; hence, to use underhand measures, to exert corrupt influence over. From Latin *temperare*, to divide in due proportion.

Tarn. L. E. 36. A small mountain lake, especially one that has no outlet. Another form of the word is "tairn." M.E. *tarne.* The word seems to be of Scandinavian origin.

Tarriance. L. E. 567. Delay, *tarry* + *ance.* The use of the word is rare. Shakespeare uses it twice.

Tinct. L. E. 10. The modern form is "tint," meaning "coloring." Latin *tinctus*, dyed.

Thrall. G. L. 162. A slave, a serf, a bondman. M. E. *thral, thralle.* A. S. *thræl.* Derived from a root meaning *to run;* hence, "one who runs" on messages.

Topaz-lights. P. A. 225. The *topaz* is a gem of various colors, yellow, white, green, or pale blue: probably from the Greek *topazōn*, the yellow topaz; hence, "topaz-lights" means sparkles of the different topaz colors.

Travail. C. A. 75. Labor, as in child-birth.

Trefoil. G. L. 1130. The three-leaved clover. Latin *trifolium.*

Trick out. G. L. 1355. To adorn, to deck out. Probably from the noun *trick*, a dexterous contrivance.

Villain. G. L. 157. Servile, originally from M. L. *villanus*, "a farm servant"; hence, came to mean "base" or "bad."

Ward. G. L. 1072. A place of guard = watch.

Ware. P. A. 363. Another form of "aware."

Waterflags. P. A. 231. Aquatic plants of the genus *Iris*.

Whole. L. E. 93. Heal. *Whole* and heal are from the same root. Compare the expression "made whole" in the New Testament. M. E. *hol*. A. S. *hāl*. G. *heil*, sound. Teutonic origin.

Wot. G. L. 447. L. E. 196. Knows. *Wot* is third person singular, present indicative of "wit." An archaic verb of Teutonic origin.

Wrack. C. A. 207. An old form of *wreck*. It is a common form used by Elizabethan writers.

Yield. G. L. 18. To give in payment, to reward.



